

MOTIVATING TRAINED WOMEN  
TO EMBRACE THEIR  
PASSION

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## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
DEDICATION .....	vii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS .....	5
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	25
Old Testament	
New Testament	
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS .....	72
Contextual Community	
Passion and Motivation	
Conclusion	
4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	94
5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	118
6. PROJECT ANALYSIS .....	141
Methodology	
Implementation	
Summary of Learning	
Conclusion	

## APPENDIX

A.	PRE AND POST QUESTIONS.....	173
B.	PROJECT ANALYSIS CHARTS .....	181
C.	FINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	188
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	190

## **ABSTRACT**

### **MOTIVATING TRAINED WOMEN TO EMBRACE THEIR PASSION**

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In Louisville, Kentucky there are limited supportive networks for African American women, post seminary graduates, that help motivate and encourage one to pursue and embrace their passion in ministry. If these women can connect in a covenant community for accountability and motivation, then it will allow them to be strengthened, empowered, and encouraged to pursue and embrace their passion. A qualitative method was used consisting of pre and post test questions and final interviews, which found this model of ministry to have a favorable response. The participants are now intentional about taking their next steps in pursuit of their passion.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am forever grateful to my family, friends, spiritual mentor and colleagues that have stood beside me with their support as I worked on this ministry project.

I would like to thank Dr. Reginald Dawkins for his wisdom and taking up the mantle, after the death of Dr. Terry Thomas, to usher me on, inspire, and challenge me, to get the best from me as I prepared this project. For this I am a better person. I would also like to thank Dr. Terry Thomas, although he did not get to complete this journey with me due to his untimely death, he laid the foundation and invested in me. I am better for knowing and working with him.

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I would like to thank all of my peers who have been there for me through thick and thin within these last three years. Thank you Alycia Marcena, Lannie Willie, Troy Russell, Eric Richardson, and Johnny Henderson for all of your love and support.

## **DEDICATION**

I would to dedicate this work to my mother, Alma L. Patterson, my daughter, Miangelia Patterson Bates, and my grandchildren, Elijah Patterson and Toria Bates. I would also like to dedicate this work to my deceased grandmothers, Anna M. Fisher and Carrie Patterson, who were pillars and examples of godliness. I also dedicate this work to my sister, Angelia Patterson, who is also deceased. I dedicate this work to my entire family (Patterson-Fisher) for their unending love. God has blessed me with the gift of family.



## **INTRODUCTION**

Within the last ten years, more African American women in the Louisville, Kentucky area are entering seminary seeking a theological education. However, after a seminary education has been achieved, what is next on the spiritual agenda for seminary trained African American women? In light of these women taking a step further to become better equipped for ministry, it would appear there is a next assignment. This model of ministry, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion,” is designed to help address the issue of pursuing the next level of ministry as one embraces their passion. This will help in the discernment process as one moves further in ministry.

There is a lifelong learning or continuing education component that comes with being in ministry. This includes lifelong learning from more than an educational and training perspective. This includes learning, understanding, and growing internally as it pertains to one’s self-perception. This model of ministry includes focus areas such as spiritual disciplines, Sabbath, spiritual goals, spiritual gifts, introspection/self-care, sermon preparation and biblical interpretation, that assists with growth and development in both ways.

In the following pages include the spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis showing that a synergy exists between personal experience and context. In light of this synergy, this project “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion” was created and designed for the growth and development of others. Within the last ten years,

seminary trained, African American women have entered the arena of ministry and vocation. However, there lacked space where these women could come together and be nurtured, encouraged and empowered. In the contextual analysis of chapter one, it has been found to support a need for sacred space for these African American, seminary trained, female clergy. Out of my spiritual journey, experience, and passion, this space was created. Following this first chapter, there are foundational works which include biblical, historical, theological and theoretical foundation related to the theme of this project.

In chapter two, the biblical paradigm used for the Old Testament is Deborah, prophet and judge (Judges 4:1-16) and the New Testament is Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). These women were used by God in mighty ways, although in different ways. However, they were chosen for the biblical foundation because of their uniqueness. Deborah's display of uniqueness comes from her being the only female playing duo roles of prophet and judge, as she gave leadership to Israel. Deborah operated with power and authority and she was obedient to the will of God. This Old Testament paradigm is a source of encouragement and empowerment as it stands as a witness to how God raised up and used Deborah in a powerful way. God can raise up and use anyone, for God's purpose and God's glory. This serves as a source of encouragement to women in ministry to embrace and passionately pursue that which God has called them to do. Mary, the mother of Jesus was not a prophet or a judge, but she was still used by God to do the miraculous which affected the whole world. Mary said yes to the plan of God, even when she did not completely understand all that was taking

place. This model of ministry also has the potential to reach beyond this context and be a change agent to affect the world.

The historical foundation is found in chapter three. This chapter focuses on the lives of the following five women from the eighteenth to the twentieth century: Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, Julia Foote, Florence Randolph, and Pauli (Anna Pauline) Murray. This historical foundation chapter reflects the lives of these women and all that they had to endure, sacrifice and fight for in order to do what they felt God had called them to do. These five African American women in ministry pursued their passion in ministry in spite of the obstacles they had to endure. This sets the example for this model of ministry because of their unending desire to be used of God to make a difference in this world.

In chapter four, the theological foundation continued in that same vein as scholars and theologians carried on the fight for rights of African American women in the church, the academy and the world. Womanist theology, a liberation theology, values the voice and the work of African American women, and seeks to make a difference in black lives. This voice empowers and breaks down oppressive forces that hinders liberation. Womanist theology creates space for African American women in ministry. This model of ministry also creates space to invest in the lives of other women with shared interests, values and expectations. This model also places African American women in position to advocate, to strengthen, and empower others which is the reason that womanist theology is foundational for this ministry project.

In chapter five is the theoretical foundation which reflects other models of ministry that are doing the same as this ministry project. Various models were examined or juxtaposed to help shape this model of ministry. You will witness in chapter six, a

component of one of these models and the richness it added to this model of ministry. In chapter five you will also observe another discipline, the field of psychology, with similar interests and goals as this ministry project. In light of the shared interest of similar models and models from another discipline, this has made it possible to glean from these groups to enhance this ministry project.

The sixth and the final chapter is the project analysis. The methodology used was a qualitative method that collected data as a way of measuring the outcome or effect of this project. Pre and post test questions were used, and final interviews were done at the end of these treatment sessions. Data was collected and compiled in the form of charts and graphs as a way of measuring the outcome of this project. This project was successful and future works will come from all that has taken place in the working of this entire project.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

Ministry is a major part of my life and it is my passion. I love to teach and preach the word of God. I love to read and interpret biblical text. I also love Christian education and making disciples. I have a passion to nurture and encourage others involved in ministry through mentorship and peer groups. I love to walk along side of those who sense a calling into ministry. I love to critically think and theologically reflect with my colleagues as well as challenge others to do the same. In light of my ability to teach, preach, disciple, and mentor, these skills are very relevant to this project. I love to invest in others in ministry and watch them move in the direction that God is calling them in.

In this context, there is a need for seminary-trained women in ministry to come forth and find their place in ministry, to examine where they are and discern the next phase of where God is leading them. Each person has gifting and passion and this ministry project is devised to help them to move in a direction that will allow them to continue to fulfill their call in ministry. I am taking my passions and gifts and incorporating them into this ministry project that can be used to strengthen, empower and encourage other peers to embrace and pursue their passion.

This ministry project, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion” is to engage women in various focus areas that will allow them to be strengthened, empowered and encouraged as they continue to discern their next phase of ministry

while embracing their passion. Historically, women have been active in serving in the church and have taken their roles very serious. Women have served in roles such as missionaries, mothers of the church, active in women's auxiliaries and prayer meetings. Women had a habit of congregating, being in community, and committed to the church in some form or another. Of course, there were roles that were delegated to women and then there were roles that were delegated to men. Anything that pertained to preaching and pastoring were roles solely reserved for men. Scriptural support used for their decision was 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34 in order to silence the voice of women in the church. This was the position of most mainline denominations, which had a tremendous effect on women nationally, including the Louisville area.

A female clergy accountability and motivational group is being developed for continued growth and development to enhance service in ministry. This accountability group will consist of six to eight African American female clergy who have taken the self-initiative to practice the discipline to continue to learn. This practice and commitment will result in ministry effectiveness as they become intentional and aggressive in their own personal development for ministry. The six to eight women involved in the accountability group are seminary trained, African American female clergy women from different traditions, living in Louisville, Kentucky. The city of Louisville was chosen because it is the largest city, the most progressive, and open to women in ministry.

One of the reasons this accountability and motivational group was chosen for women at this level of ministry is because there are none in this area that are operating at this level. Within the last ten years women in this area start going to seminary. For those

who have completed seminary, no accountability connections have been made as an accountability group, whose focus is on every aspect of ministry growth and development, including a scholastic challenge. Another reason this accountability group is necessary is because sometimes women do not take the time to intentionally connect due to various legitimate reasons. The connection is more than for the individual but also for the accountability community. The person is not only involved to receive but also to give because we learn from each other.

The turning point for me in my walk with God is when I moved to Louisville, Kentucky and decided to find a church home in Louisville so that I could attend and actively serve. I had family members living in Louisville who attended a progressive church so I decided to attend. I did not know this church was large and when I got there I was overwhelmed by the size of the church and the number of members. Another surprise was that there was a woman preaching, which was not the norm. A few weeks went by and I returned and this time a visiting preacher was preaching. I did enjoy church each time I went but I was not ready to join. I tried it again another Sunday and the pastor was there this time. By this time, I was not so overwhelmed because even though this was a large church, it was a loving church. I felt this was the church for me so I joined that Sunday and this started my true spiritual journey and an end to my worries.

As a result of joining this church, I started doing something that I had never done before and that was attending Bible study. The pastor was an excellent preacher and teacher who encouraged you to read and study for yourself. I began to read and study the Bible and this became the most amazing book to me. I started attending and participating

in Sunday school. Because I was receiving sound biblical teaching, I learned what it meant to tithe from a biblical perspective. I became a tither and learned about and participated in sacrificial giving. I also joined the choir where I learned to do more than sing but rather minister through song. I learned that a life devoted to God and practicing the spiritual disciplines to cultivate my relationship with God had a tremendous effect on ministering through song.

Several years later I sensed a call into ministry but did nothing about it for two reasons. One, there were no women preachers in my family and two I was afraid to stand in front of people and speak. As time passed I still sensed a calling to ministry and then I started bargaining with God for more time to discern. There were two speakers that came for revival and after hearing their messages it was as if they were sitting in on my conversations with God. That was enough to scare me to get busy so I scheduled an appointment to speak with the pastor regarding my call to ministry. We had a rather detailed conversation and he acknowledged my call to preach and was I was set aside to do my initial sermon and attend the ongoing ministers' meetings. I did my initial sermon in 2004 along with twelve other ministers. The text that I used was Philippians 4:10-20 titled "The Secret of Being Content." I was so nervous I could have had a nervous breakdown but I got through it and was licensed to preach in the Baptist church. After being licensed I continued to attend minister's meeting on a monthly basis where the pastor would speak on various topics relating to ministry. Approximately one year later I decided to enter seminary. I was relatively a healthy person at that time and was hardly ever sick. I ended up sick and the doctor had me off of work for ten days, which was really frustrating for me. The decision to acknowledge that my season had ended for the



choir and it was time to prepare for seminary came from my time on sick leave. I entered seminary in August 2004 in pursuit of my M.Div. I took one class a semester for three years at a very conservative southern Baptist seminary. Because I was attending a seminary that did not embrace women preachers plus the seminary decided women could no longer take preaching courses, I transferred to another seminary. I feel that going to the Baptist seminary was not in vain. I took several classes that I would not have had the opportunity to take at the Presbyterian seminary such as Hermeneutics and Systematic Theology, I, II and III. When I transferred to the Presbyterian seminary, I continued to work in corporate America plus took two classes a semester. I did this for two years and then left corporate America to attend seminary full time to finish my last two years.

During the time I attended my first women in ministry conference, I ended up in a breakout session for pastors. At that time, I knew I had a pastoral calling but saw myself as a co-pastor thinking that I would marry a pastor and we would share pastoral responsibilities. God did not tell me this but it was my mindset as if this was the only way that I could become a pastor. After this conference I still believed I had a pastoral calling and was not sure how God was going to work it out but definitely left it in God's hands. I also felt there was going to be a shift but was not sure what that meant. I went to another conference and I received clarity. It was time for me to move from my present church. In some ways this was not a very good feeling because I had grown accustomed to where I was serving and absolutely loved the people. As time went on it became very clear it was time for me to move. God had placed in my spirit a church from another denomination, much smaller than my present church. When I left my present church, I did not go directly to the church that God had placed in my spirit. Instead I went to

another megachurch at its Jeffersonville, Indiana location. I knew some people who left my previous church and were serving there so I joined them and started teaching discipleship classes. I was still in seminary at the time and needed to do my practicum and it just did not work out for me to do it at my new church home. I had no other choice but to go to the church that God had placed in my spirit. I actually had already discussed with the pastor the possibility of doing my practicum there before I left my former church but decided to do it at my present church home. This of course did not pan out so I went where I was led which was a United Methodist church under the tutelage of a female pastor. This was definitely God ordained. I was able to shadow her and learn things about ministry that benefited me. She was a humble and patient servant. She was also the first African American woman to be ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church Kentucky Conference. She has been a lot of firsts especially as a female senior pastor. She has been and continues to be very influential in my ministry and still serves as my mentor.

This congregation was very small compared to the last two churches I served. I felt led to make this church my church home so I joined a completely different denomination. I became the director of Christian Education to build up the Church School hour. Since I was already in ministry, I found out the process to continue on in ministry toward ordination in the United Methodist Church. I started pastoring a small church, part time in September 2011. I started the ordination process and became commissioned in 2012. After being commissioned, I had to be placed in a pastoral position full time so I was appointed to campus ministry at the historically black university in Frankfort, Kentucky. I moved back to my home town area into my

grandparent's house. The church was over an hour away in the Louisville district. The campus ministry appointment was only fifteen minutes away and it was considered in the Frankfort district. After becoming commissioned, I went through two years of residency and then I was ordained as an elder in 2014. After having two appointments for two years, I did not return to the church but was appointed to campus ministry full time. Although I do not physically live in the Louisville area, I am still very active in this area. The Kentucky Annual Conference is in this area and I serve on several boards in this area. I also have mentees in Louisville and I am still connected to the seminary through various programs and workshops.

The 2013 estimated population for the city of Louisville is 609,893 and a total population of 4,399,583 in the state of Kentucky.<sup>1</sup> The last census was taken in 2010 and the estimated Louisville population was 597,265 and a state population of 4,339,349 with females making up 51.6% of the population.<sup>2</sup> The African American population makes up 22.9% (or 136,774) of the Louisville population.<sup>3</sup> Of the 22.9% African American population, 53.5% (or 73,192) make up the female African American population.<sup>4</sup> The median household income, 2009-2013, is \$44,159 and the educational level of Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009-2013, makes up

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<sup>1</sup> "Kentucky QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2148006.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "Kentucky QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2148006.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Kentucky QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2148006.html>.

<sup>4</sup> "Current Louisville, Kentucky Population, Demographics and Stats in 2016, 2105," Suburban Stats, accessed October 10, 2016, <https://suburbanstats.org/population/kentucky/how-many-people-live-in-louisville>.

26.9% of the population.<sup>5</sup> Of the African American female population, there are 6.8% (or 4,976) with a Bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>6</sup>

There are approximately 150 female ministers in Louisville and about 18-20% of the women ministers have completed either their M.Div., D.Min. or are presently in seminary. In my D.Min. context, more women were becoming seminary trained. At the present, in one of the main Louisville seminaries, there are five women pursuing their M.Div. compared to eleven women three years ago. This could be due to different variables such as the lack of pastoral support, finances, see no benefit because it will not change their position, or there are no pastoral positions available.

The women included in this ministry project are represented in the 22.9% (136,774) African Americans living in Louisville and the 53.5% (73,174) who are female. The women are also represented in the 6.8%, African American women 25+ with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

In reviewing my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis, a synergy exists between my personal experience and my context. As a result of this connection, the circumstances are favorable for this project to be a change agent in my context. In my context there is a need for accountability and motivation for trained women to embrace their passion, which will help enhance ministry effectiveness. Enhanced ministry effectiveness takes place as one becomes intentional and aggressive in their personal

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<sup>5</sup> "Kentucky QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2148006.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "The State of the African Americans in Kentucky," Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://kchr.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/DDCE5951-B063-4285-B0B1-FEE5C9E73BC6/0/WhitePaperRevised.pdf>.

development for ministry. The context is within a small intimate community, the accountability and motivational group, in a larger area, the city of Louisville, Kentucky.

At the crossroad of the convergence of personal experience and context, there is a model of ministry that has been developed. Out of my spiritual journey, experience, and passion comes a need to create sacred space for African American female clergy. Within the context, a new paradigm is taking shape, where a new group of people, seminary trained, African American females, are entering the arena of ministry and vocation. In light of this new group, there is a need to provide accountability and motivation, as one moves forward in ministry in pursuit of their passion.

Graduating with a seminary degree is actually only the beginning. One phase of the journey has been accomplished but yet another one is to begin. The academy has supplied the tools to help one operate effectively in ministry. However, unless the tools are applied, this could have a tremendous effect on ministry effectiveness, which is the reason for the accountability and motivational group. Each member of the group is the recipient of a Masters of Divinity degree. In light of this academic accomplishment, it is necessary to continue to sharpen the tools that have been received as one continues to discern where God is leading and as one is motivated to embrace their passion.

Continuing education, in some form, is mandatory for ministry effectiveness. Tools were given during seminary, but one must apply what is given, as well as continue to self educate as one grows and develops in ministry. There are tons of books, in every category, that were not covered in seminary that can help with the lifelong learning process. There are also seminars and conferences that can be of benefit as well; things that will challenge one to continue to grow and develop as a minister, leader, pastor, or

wherever God is leading. Learning is a continuous process. What better way to grow than in a community with shared interests, vision and goals for lifelong learning? Where there is a lack of accountability and motivation, opportunities for growth may fall by the wayside, leaving behind unrevealed possibilities that could bless others.

In view of my context, it not only reveals a need for accountability, but also the need for awareness. Unless a statistical analysis is completed and reviewed of my context, it may appear the need for an accountable and motivational group is irrelevant. In reviewing the analysis, it sheds light on the history of African American clergy-women, which paved the way for all African American women in ministry. Down through the years, women in ministry have made their way to the forefront and have been an asset in every area of ministry. Today, this legacy continues through women who have also said yes to God and operate in obedience to this call. Like women of the past, the ministry journey is not without a struggle, but yet the continuance is necessary. In women coming together in the form of an accountability and motivational group, this is one way to help keep the work going. The goal of the accountability and motivational group is for ministry effectiveness by embracing their passion. By one embracing their passion, true ministry effectiveness will develop, but it does not stop there; rather, it continues to give, like the women in the past. As one embraces their passion, it should have an impact on another's growth, development and ministry effectiveness, even within another context.

The accountability and motivational group's goal of ministry effectiveness through embracing their passion will result in the group being empowered. However, the group's responsibility will be to empower others. The group is in the position to make a

difference in the lives of those that live in the city of Louisville and even in the state of Kentucky. There is a need to find creative ways, through sponsoring conferences, seminars, mentoring, and other means, in order to make this happen throughout the state. There is also a need to share of one's experience and spiritual journey with others to help to enlighten and encourage other women along their ministry journey. The bottom line is that this accountability and motivational group has to be more than about the group's effectiveness, personal development and motivation for ministry; although this is the main goal. However, from the group's growth and development, this should birth new ministry opportunities that reach beyond the group's boundaries and involve the empowerment of other women along their ministry journey.

The gathering of an ecumenical, female African American, seminary trained clergy group is more than just a gathering. It is the coming together to reflect and dialogue about the group's common goal relative to ministry, and the individual desired goals as well as differences. This can only take place in an intimate community where there is trust, commitment to the task, and a desire and excitement about the outcome. In essence, the gathering is very purposeful and intentional, and there is an expectancy for positive change that will enhance any area of ministry.

Taking into account this is an ecumenical group with various religious traditions, there will be theological differences; however, the diversity is welcomed. One of the many advantages of having an ecumenical group is that information regarding religious traditions can be shared and any unanswered questions can be raised. When developing a new paradigm in any context, there are risks and challenges associated with the task.

Denominational differences can cause barriers, but focusing on the common goal can provide a remedy.

The accountability and motivational group has the capability to bless each person individually, collectively as a group, and to bless others outside of the group. Due to the passion for the growth and development of people, ministry experience, and the call to lead the people of God, the necessary qualities and characteristics exist and qualify me as a good candidate to develop and lead this group. God has given a heart for God's people, and there is a special place in my heart to equip leaders for service in God's kingdom. It is also where my ministry experience as a Christian educator, mentor, pastor, and other leadership positions converge within the context. The passion and desire exists to sow into others to affect change.

In reflecting on the spiritual journey, there have been a series of ups and downs, the good and the bad, which are all a part of life, even in the midst of doing ministry. The spiritual journey will be shared and discussed within my context because the unexpected will occur. As clergy, there are responsibilities that need to be handled, so when issues arise, it cannot hinder or delay the work assigned by God. The context will serve as support when life circumstances occur which is a remedy for isolation. Accountability helps eradicate isolation because of the communal aspect of the context. Fortunately, the community has always supported me during the various stages of my life. As a result of consistent support, it has made an impactful difference in my life. With clergy suicide on the rise, accountability in community is vital. Isolation may feed into the rise of clergy suicide, but communal accountability can combat against the various levels of the threat of suicide.



The female mentor within my life has always operated as a sounding board when it comes to making major decisions involving ministry. Sacred space was created so that appropriate decisions could be made. The accountability and motivational group will also be used as a sounding board, as God continues to give clarity and direction in each individual's life. As previously stated, from the group's growth and development, new ministry opportunities should be birthed. In my context, since growth is expected, preparation is key for the next level assignment, individually and collectively.

In the creation of any new paradigm, risks and challenges will come. The group is ecumenical with various religious traditions, so there will be theological differences. This is not a concern but rather, it could be a challenge, which can still be viewed in a positive light. I attended a Presbyterian seminary with a strong Baptist background, Armenian in theology, then moved to the Methodist tradition, all posed some challenges. Being forced to think outside of the box and think globally in my theology helped with viewing the world through a different lens. The same expectation exists within the current program as well as within the current context.

During ministry, there are seasons when clergy are busier than others, and may not be able to put in the time necessary for their commitment to the task, which poses the challenge of time constraints. In this case, adjustments will need to be made, depending on the circumstance, which will be taken into consideration when outlining the details of the group. There is also the issue of lack of interest, commitment or vision that will definitely cause problems. Giving leadership to any group or organization calls for properly addressing issues, but still maintaining a focus on your primary goal. Since

personal relationships exist with the women in the group, any distraction that may arise, can be handled in a constructive manner limiting dysfunctional activity within the group.

In the context there are a number of similarities that will make a difference and possibly avoid some of the challenges. Everyone is from the Louisville, Kentucky area. These women will have gone to the same seminary simultaneously, but graduated at different times with an M.Div. All participants are African American clergy-women who are serious about ministry and discerning their next level of ministry. Due to the common interests, goals and focus, these are the basis for a very favorable outcome.

The general nature of this project is to develop an accountability and motivational group for female, African American who are seminary-trained clergy. The purpose and goal of this group is to motivate trained women to embrace their passion. The participants will also develop a practice they can commit to for ministry effectiveness as they become intentional and aggressive in their own personal development for ministry.

This accountability and motivational group is also multifaceted. In this group, each woman will be empowered as they become intentional in the development and practice of their study regimen. The motivation of this group can also be viewed as another way to empowerment. During the time of gathering, each person has the opportunity to share with the group the development of their study regimen, including what they have experienced as a result of the study time. There is also a study regimen the group will do together so that we learn and are empowered in community. The group will work on a joint project in the form of an empowerment conference, to empower other women in ministry. This includes women who are discerning a call, a next level assignment, considering seminary or seeking to connect with other women in ministry.

Empowerment will take place at three levels. Empowerment of the individual, the group as we share sacred space, and other women through the empowerment conference.

Empowerment will come from individual study time including the practice of the spiritual disciplines; all of which help cultivate one's relationship with God. It is also considered intimate space where one can speak and hear from God. Although the participant is a part of the accountability and motivational group, it does not exceed this very important and valuable devotional and study time. The group will study in community on various topics that will help promote additional growth and development as well as improve ministry effectiveness. However, it is vital the personal study regimen remains strong and steady because it will only enhance their growth as well as the time spent in the group.

In the accountability and motivational group, the areas of focus and discussion are spiritual discipline and devotional, Sabbath rest, spiritual goals, spiritual gifts, introspection, sermon preparation, Bible study and biblical interpretation. The practice of these is done in the individual's personal study time. Discussion and further practice will take place within the group. There will be a heavy emphasis on discernment as the group moves forward seeking direction from God. Also, this will also allow one to witness the connection of gifting, calling and passion.

Within the accountability and motivational group, the topic of spiritual discipline and devotional will be discussed. We will read the book, *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster. This book discusses the inward, outward and corporate disciplines that will help shape one's personal development. The practice of the disciplines will be conducted in the personal study and devotional time but it will also be discussed in

community. It would benefit the group to know which disciplines each person practices and the effects it has on their growth and development. The purpose is to get the group to critically think or rethink what would benefit their development. The discussion and sharing among the group in this shared sacred space, including the practice, should help foster a more meaningful devotional life.

The topic and the meaning of Sabbath rest are often not discussed among clergy. For clergy who minister on Sundays, this is not a day of rest. For those clergy who are bi-vocational, do they actually get a Sabbath? The discussion around Sabbath rest is to raise the awareness and to provoke thought and action. The Sabbath will be addressed from a biblical Old Testament perspective in addition to a theological perspective from the various faith traditions. The topic of Sabbath will be discussed and practiced in community as well as practiced individually. Self-care can also be discussed in conjunction with the topic of Sabbath rest. Self care challenges clergy to find some balance that allows one to do ministry, and enjoy life.

Each individual in the accountability and motivational group will be asked to set their own spiritual goals or spiritual growth goals. Goal setting is not necessarily for the benefit of the group as much as it is for the individual. Setting spiritual goals forces an individual to seriously think about what will foster growth and development, how will they achieve those goals or the steps and the expected outcome. The setting of goals includes setting short term and long term goals, as one senses where God is leading.

The participants in the accountability and motivational group will more than likely already know their spiritual gifts, so an assessment may not be necessary. However, if an assessment is needed, one will be provided. The spiritual gifts will be

discussed in the group to raise attention to how God is working in their lives and ministry. It will also raise the awareness of the role this plays in the setting of spiritual goals; where they converge or do they converge?

Introspection is a topic that I rarely hear discussed among clergy. Introspection has to do with self-examination, the taking of an objective approach to evaluating oneself. Clergy have many responsibilities that involve taking care of the needs of others. Taking care of the needs of clergy is often forgotten. Inspection allows a person to objectively evaluate self, the good, bad and indifferent. As clergy, we all have areas of strengths and weaknesses, including those areas that one must be intentional in addressing. One of the misconceptions of ministry is that once a person enters the arena of ministry, all issues and past baggage are automatically removed. In light of same, there is no further thought or work on areas of weakness or areas of improvement, which can be disastrous. Introspection can address and attack some of those areas that need work. As a group, the topic introspection will be given some serious thought and reflection. Because the group is shared sacred space, there is room to assist, encourage, motivate, and to challenge one another in an effort to foster healing and deliverance. However, the actual working out of these concerns will have to be the responsibility of the individual.

The anticipation is that there will be some within the group that were required by their denomination to take Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and go through a series of psychological evaluations as a part of the ordination process. This will also be discussed and shared among the group. This is not to declare this as the answer to all of the

introspection questions, but to give others an idea of how serious other denominations are about clergy's role and responsibility.

Sermon preparation is another area that the group will engage. Each person within the group has their own preaching style and sermon preparation. It may be helpful if this is shared with others, to help those in the group who are still trying to find their proclamation voice. The recommended reading for discussion will be books by Cleophus LaRue: *Power in the Pulpit* and *This is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry*. *Power in the Pulpit* is about sermon preparation plus a sermon from influential men and women of God who take the task of preaching and sermon preparation serious. *This is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry* is about the testimonies and stories of great women of God entering ministry plus a sermon. These books will tremendously enlighten, motivate and challenge anyone serious about proclaiming the Good News. One of the exercises under the umbrella of preaching will be to prepare a sermon together, giving it the various voices, plus tag team preaching it.

Biblical study and interpretation are necessary as well. Understanding the Bible historically is necessary whether one is personally studying or studying for preaching and teaching. The group will study several books of the Bible. There will be a focus on the importance of correctly interrupting the scriptures that are used to preach and teach prior to making application. The group will also be asked to bring a list of the tools used to assist them with studying and preparation to share with the group.

The accountability and motivational group can fall under the umbrella of transformative learning, which will be done in community to affect a change in each

individual, the group, and other women in ministry. As previously stated, true ministry effectiveness does not stop with the individual, but continues to give. This is one of the reasons for wanting to create an empowerment conference that will help other women in ministry. There are areas in Kentucky where women are called to ministry but do not know what to do. There are women who are not sure what effective ministry looks like because they have no example. There are still parts of the state where women are not acknowledged in ministry and areas where there is little to no seminary trained women. This conference will help women to gain some understanding of what it means to be in ministry. By putting on this conference, the accountability group will be able to share their ministry experience with other women. Women within the group will be from various areas of ministries. The sharing of testimonies and stories from the group will provide a relatable experience for the women. There will also be a question and answer period to make this conference more relevant, which should help shed some light where there is darkness.

As a part of the accountability group, there will be seminars and symposiums that we will be attending as a part of continuing education. The group will plan to attend other lectures and conferences that will promote learning in their various disciplines. Since we are lifelong learners as women in ministry, it is to our advantage that we incorporate this into our group.

The goal of the project is to develop an effective model of ministry that will motivate women to embrace their passion and lead an effective ministry. I seek to learn the impact of studying and sharing in community. This project will be used to help launch other models of ministry such as non-seminary trained women in ministry and

women who are discerning the call to ministry. Further, the project will help people grow and advance in ministry and the personal passion motivates me to invest in others. The project will assist in expanding my knowledge and as a result, I will become more effective, relatable and relevant to others in ministry. Finally, the project will assist in building the research skillset from the biblical, historical, theological and theoretical perspectives, which will increase knowledge, and enhance my mental acumen in gaining a greater insight within the current context.

This accountability and motivational group was chosen for those who have completed seminary with no accountability connection. This group has the ability to connect African American women to share gifts and passions as well as to act as a covenant community of shared, sacred space. As an accountability group, the focus will be on every aspect of ministry growth and development, including a scholastic challenge. This ministry project, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion” will also allow these women to be strengthened, empowered and encouraged as one continues to discern their next phase of ministry while embracing their passion.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The goal of this biblical foundation chapter is to set forth a model of ministry entitled Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion. The context for this model of ministry represents a demographic area, where a new group of seminary trained, African American females, are entering the arena of ministry and vocation. Within the last ten years, more African American females are completing their seminary education and in pursuit of vocational ministry. Both biblical texts speak of women who were used by God in a unique and unusual way, especially during their era. The Old Testament biblical text depicts Deborah giving effective leadership, as a prophetess and a judge over Israel. The New Testament text shows Mary as the vessel God used to bring forth the Redeemer. These biblical texts are very relevant to this model of ministry and demonstrate God using women in a capacity of God's own choosing, consistent with God's will.

#### **Old Testament**

The Old Testament scripture is Judges 4:1-16, which reads,

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years. At that time

Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, ‘Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.’” Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” And she said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand warriors went up behind him; and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the other Kenites, that is, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had encamped as far away as Elon-bezaananim, which is near Kedesh. When Sisera was told that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the troops who were with him, from Harosheth-ha-goiim to the Wadi Kishon. Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day on which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. The LORD is indeed going out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him. And the LORD hrew Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak; Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot, while Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-ha-goiim. All the army of Sisera fell by the sword; no one was left.<sup>1</sup>

### *Introduction*

In this Old Testament text of Judges 4:1-16, “Deborah, the leader of Israel, is identified as a prophetess, a judge, and the wife of Lapidoth (Jgs. 4:4) and probably lived about 1200 B.C. or slightly later during a period of Canaanite oppression.”<sup>2</sup> Deborah’s position as a prophetess, indicating that her message was from God, is not unique in the

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<sup>1</sup> Biblical citations with the document are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted, Judges 4:1-16.

<sup>2</sup> Pamela Scalise, “Deborah,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, eds. Chad Brand et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 408.

Bible, but it was unusual.<sup>3</sup> However, “Deborah was unique in that only she is said to have “judged Israel” before the major event that marks her narrative (Jgs. 4:4).”<sup>4</sup>

According to the text, “Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord...so the Lord sold them in the hand of King Jabin of Canaan...” (v. 1-2). When Deborah was raised as a judge, Israel had been oppressed by King Jabin of Canaan for twenty years (Jgs. 4:2–3).<sup>5</sup>

As a prophetess Deborah summoned Barak and delivered an oracle giving him God’s instructions for a battle in the Jezreel Valley against the Canaanite army commanded by Sisera.<sup>6</sup> Deborah’s authority under God was evidenced by Barak’s desire to have her present with him in the army camp.<sup>7</sup> She commanded Barak to take the field as Israelite commander-in-chief against Sisera, and consented to accompany him at his insistence; the result was the crushing defeat of Sisera at the battle of Kishon (Jgs. 4:15; 5:19ff.).<sup>8</sup>

Deborah demonstrated that it is possible for God to use a woman in a unique, visible and authoritative leadership capacity that will gain ground for the kingdom and glorify God. Deborah’s leadership provides a biblical foundation for motivating trained women to embrace their passion for ministry that will allow God to use them in a visible, unique and authoritative way for the glory of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Deborah,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 605.

<sup>4</sup> Elwell and Beitzel, “Deborah,” 605.

<sup>5</sup> Brandon Grafius, “Deborah the Judge,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, eds. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Scalise, “Deborah,” 408.

<sup>7</sup> Scalise, “Deborah,” 408.

<sup>8</sup> F. F. Bruce, “Deborah,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 267-268.

### *Contextual Analysis*

The book of Judges is “the seventh book of the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) and the Christian OT; it is the second book of the Former Prophets, a subcollection in the Nevi'im, or Prophets section, of the Tanakh.”<sup>9</sup> Tanakh is a “Jewish term for the Hebrew Bible, based on the initial letters of its three sections: *Torah*, *Neviim*, and *Kethuvim*.”<sup>10</sup> The book of Judges is preceded by the book of Joshua and followed by the book of 1 Samuel in the Tanakh, but it is followed by the book of Ruth in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> As it pertains to the name of the book, one scholar is of the opinion that “The book derives its name from the designation of the principal characters, *shophetim* (2:18), ‘governors.’ But they functioned as Israel’s deliverers (*moshi'im*) from outside enemies.”<sup>12</sup> On one hand Daniel Block says, “In most cases in the OT the term *shophet* denotes an official who decides legal cases in a court of law.”<sup>13</sup> At the same time Block states that, “the root bears a broader meaning, ‘to govern,’ which can involve internal issues such as disputes among citizens but may also involve external problems; settling national and tribal disputes with outsiders.”<sup>14</sup> However, another scholar is of the opinion that “the term “judge” (fpv *sopet*) in Hebrew can also mean “rule” or “ruler,” and it is this meaning of

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<sup>9</sup> Barry L. Bandstra, “Judges,” in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2011), 502.

<sup>10</sup> Sandra Gravett et al., *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 467.

<sup>11</sup> Bandstra, “Judges,” 502.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Block, “Judges,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 962.

<sup>13</sup> Block, “Judges,” 962.

<sup>14</sup> Block, “Judges,” 962.

the term that applies to the major characters in the book.”<sup>15</sup> The scholar further iterates that the judges “are primarily warrior rulers who led Israel in fighting oppressive enemies...also involved in maintaining Israel's religious life and institutions with varying degrees of success (2:17; 5:1-31; 6:25-27; 8:22-28).”<sup>16</sup>

As it relates to the composition of the book of Judges, some scholars believe “the date of composition range from around 1000 BC to the postexilic period (late sixth century BC).”<sup>17</sup> In regard to the author, Balogh states, “The standard scholarly view is that Judges is part of what Noth called the “Deuteronomistic History”—a literary project that spans the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.”<sup>18</sup> Yet there are other scholars who “are unconvinced that Judges employs classic deuteronomistic language and themes.”<sup>19</sup> However, another scholar agrees with the deuteronomistic historian authorship and opines that “the deuteronomistic historian, who made his final compilation about the year 550 B.C., did not compose his story from beginning to end but made use of various sources and earlier compilations which he found to hand.”<sup>20</sup> Adding to the ambiguous theories of authorship and compilation, another scholar has the following opinion:

The author of this book was most probably Samuel. The internal evidence both of the first sixteen chapters and of the appendix warrants this conclusion. It was

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<sup>15</sup> Dennis T. Olson, “The Book of Judges” in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2:723.

<sup>16</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:723.

<sup>17</sup> Trent C. Balogh and Amy L. Butler, “Book of Judges,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, eds. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 92.

<sup>18</sup> Balogh and Butler, “Book of Judges,” 92.

<sup>19</sup> Balogh and Butler, “Book of Judges,” 92.

<sup>20</sup> James D. Martin, *The Book of Judges* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 5.

probably composed during Saul's reign, or at the very beginning of David's. The words in 18:30, 31, imply that it was written after the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and after it was set up at Nob (1 Sam. 21). In David's reign the ark was at Gibeon (1 Chr. 16:39).<sup>21</sup>

The Book of Judges is structured with "three main parts: a double introduction (1:1-2:5; 2:6-3:6), a double conclusion (17:1-18:31; 19:1-21:25), and a main section that is commonly called the 'cycles' section (3:7-16:31)."<sup>22</sup>

Each cycle is structured after a literary pattern signaled by a series of recurring formulas:

(1) "The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (2:11 NIV; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). (2) "The Lord gave/sold the Israelites into the hands of the enemy" (2:14; 6:1; 13:1). (3) "The Israelites cried out to the Lord" (3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10). (4) "The Lord raised up a deliverer for Israel to save them" (2:16, 18; 3:9, 15). (5) "And X [the oppressing nation] was made subject to Israel" (8:28; cp. 3:30; 4:23). (6) "Then the land was undisturbed for X years" (3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28). (7) "Then X [the judge] died" (2:19; 3:11; 4:1b; 8:28; 12:7).<sup>23</sup>

In the Book of Judges, "the first and last verses of the book place it neatly in its historical setting."<sup>24</sup> Motyer goes further to say that Judges "deals with the period 'after the death of Joshua' (1:1) and before there was any 'king in Israel' (21:25), that is, between the exodus and the monarchy."<sup>25</sup> According to Bandstra, "After the death of Joshua, the Israelites are attacked by various forces in and around Canaan (Judg. 1)" and this resulted "because the Israelites continue to serve Baal rather than God (2-3)."<sup>26</sup> The next period

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<sup>21</sup> M. G. Easton, "Judges," in *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1893), 60.

<sup>22</sup> K. Lawson Younger, "Judges/Ruth," in *The NIV Application Commentary*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 30.

<sup>23</sup> Block, "Judges," 962-964.

<sup>24</sup> J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Judges* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Motyer, *The Message of Judges*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Bandstra, "Judges," 502.

included “Israel’s history under the judges (2:6–16:31)” which covers “six successive periods of oppression and the careers of twelve deliverer-judges (3:7–16:31)” and then the “appendix (17:1–21:25).”<sup>27</sup> To help bring clarity to chapter four, the selected text, “Judges 5 retells the account of the Israelites’ victory over Sisera in poetic form.”<sup>28</sup> According to Olson, “The existence of two versions of the same event, the narrative in Judges 4 and the poetic song in Judges 5, raises issues of relative dating and dependence of each text on the other.”<sup>29</sup> There is the opinion among scholars “that the poetic song in Judges 5 is the earlier of the two accounts because of its archaic Hebrew language and style.”<sup>30</sup> As it pertains to Judges the fourth chapter, Olson further say that, “The prose narrative reflects standard classical Hebrew from a time later in Israel’s history.”<sup>31</sup> The selected text falls within the period of the Judges (4:1-16), under the leadership of Deborah. The text opens within the literary pattern, after Ehud died, Israel done what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan (vv. 1-3). A further breakdown of the text includes the following: Deborah, a prophetess, judging in Israel (vv. 4-5), Barak and Deborah preparation for battle (vv. 6-10), the plot of the enemy (vv.11-13), and Barak and Deborah victorious in battle (vv. 14-16).

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<sup>27</sup> J. B. Payne, “Judges,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 627.

<sup>28</sup> Grafius, “Deborah the Judge,” 100.

<sup>29</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:776.

<sup>30</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:776.

<sup>31</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:776.

### *Detailed Analysis*

In the opening of the selected text, verses one through three fall within the cycle of “Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died,” “...the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan...,” and “...the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help...and had oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.” Olson states that this “cycle of events in this chapter begins in the same way the earlier judge paradigm had established (2:11-19) and the previous model of Othniel had confirmed (3:7-11).”<sup>32</sup> According to K. Lawson Younger, “The opening statement ‘the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the Lord’ is the exact wording as the opening to the Ehud narrative.”<sup>33</sup> He continues by articulating that “Ehud’s judgeship did not prevent the cycle recurrence” and further justifies his position by pointing out “..., the Israelites return to their apostasy (the Song of Deborah will reveal that they worship ‘new gods,’ 5:8)”<sup>34</sup>

Up to this point, according to the third chapter of the Book of Judges, there had already been three judges: “(1) Othniel (3:7–11), (2) Ehud (3:12–30) and (3) Shamgar (3:31).”<sup>35</sup> Ehud was actually the second judge, according the book of Judges, with Shamgar being the third (3:31) but Shamgar is not acknowledged in the selected text (4:1-16). One scholar notes that, “Shamgar, who comes next, no deuteronomistic framework appears: this and the fragmentary nature of 3:31 have led commentators to

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<sup>32</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>33</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 138.

<sup>34</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 138.

<sup>35</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Book of Judges,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1245-1246.



question his place in the book.”<sup>36</sup> Exum states that, “Some LXX manuscripts place the Shamgar notice after 16:31.”<sup>37</sup> Another scholar explains that, “the editors of the book of Judges were not interested in chronology or historical accuracy.”<sup>38</sup> McCann goes further to state that “the material on the minor judges may have been inserted by editors primarily so that the total number of judges (not counting Abimelech in chap. 9) would amount to twelve, one per tribe, although not every tribe is explicitly represented.”<sup>39</sup> The rationale by these scholars appears to give some validity to the opening verse in the selected text “...after Ehud died.” Ehud was “from Benjamin’s tribe who delivered Israel from Eglon, king of the Moabites (Jgs 3:12–30).”<sup>40</sup> It was further noted that, “When the 18-year rule of Eglon over the Israelites ended, an 80-year period of peace began.”<sup>41</sup>

Verse two continues with the cycle “...the Lord sold them into the hand...” of the enemy “King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim.” According to McCann, “Joshua is said to have defeated a King Jabin of Hazor (Josh. 11:1-5); but the details of the account of Joshua’s victory differ from Judges 4, so the relationship between the two is unclear.”<sup>42</sup> In addressing this issue, McCann asserts that, “Perhaps the author/editors of the book of

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<sup>36</sup> J. Cheryl Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (July 1, 1990): 410-421, accessed November 5, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>37</sup> Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold,” 410-421.

<sup>38</sup> J. Clinton McCann, “Judges,” in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, vol. 7 (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002), 47.

<sup>39</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 47.

<sup>40</sup> Elwell and Beitzel, “Book of Judges,” 675.

<sup>41</sup> Elwell and Beitzel, “Book of Judges,” 675.

<sup>42</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 50.

Judges borrowed the name ‘Jabin’ from Joshua 11, or perhaps ‘Jabin’ was a throne name and there were several kings with this name.”<sup>43</sup> Olson states, “Some scholars suggest that Judges 4-5 is a retelling of the same event as recorded in Joshua 11 with some changes.”<sup>44</sup> He further states, “Others suggest that the name of Jabin has been imported into the present text of Judges 4, since Jabin plays no active role in the story itself and is never mentioned in the song in Judges 5.”<sup>45</sup> Younger brings to the attention that “immediately the prologue introduces Jabin’s commander, Sisera, who will be the up-front antagonist in the story.”<sup>46</sup> He further states that “Jabin blends into the back ground; the text mentions his name twice (4:7, 17), and the epilogue resolves matters through a threefold repetition of his name [vv. 23-24].”<sup>47</sup> According to one scholar, who more or less agrees with Younger, states, “The central figure in ch. 4, and the sole figure in ch. 5, is Sisera, and it is with Sisera as Israel’s enemy that these narratives are really concerned.”<sup>48</sup> Martin maintains that, “Sisera’s place of origin was Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles, probably a Canaanite city-state lying north-west of Megiddo, just under the Carmel ridge.”<sup>49</sup> The text shows Sisera as the commander of King Jabin of Canaan’s army, but another scholar renders a totally opposite theory, claiming that, “Sisera, who may have been one of the Peoples of the Sea, was not the general of Jabin, but the king of

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<sup>43</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 50.

<sup>44</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>45</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>46</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 138.

<sup>47</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 138.

<sup>48</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 54.

<sup>49</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

Harolsheth-ha-goiim.”<sup>50</sup> In light of the various theories, the text demonstrates that, “King Jabin remains a shadowy figure in the background to Judges 4; general Sisera is the one Canaanite who grabs the spotlight and generates any narrative interest in the story.”<sup>51</sup>

In the opening of verse three, the cycle resumes with “Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.” Martin asserts this is “again a motif of the deuteronomistic framework, as is the harsh oppression of the Israelites by the enemy for a given number of years.”<sup>52</sup> The text reflects that Sisera had “nine hundred chariots of iron.” Olson brings to light that “mention of iron provides a glimpse into the major culture shift in technology occurring in ancient Near East at this time from the earlier Bronze Age to the early phase of the Iron Age (1200-1000 BCE).”<sup>53</sup> He explains that “Canaanites were the more established, powerful, and richer culture in comparison to the Israelites” and as a result “had access to the most recent military technology, which they used to maintain their power and ‘cruelly’ oppress the Israelites.”<sup>54</sup> The chariots “were used for pursuit and slaughter of the fleeing enemy” and “were primarily a killing platform.”<sup>55</sup> Younger explains that “On account of these chariots, Sisera is able to oppress the Israelites for twenty years, resulting in the Israelites’ crying out to Yahweh.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Jacob M. Myers, “The Book of Judges,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1953), 2:712.

<sup>51</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>52</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

<sup>53</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>54</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779.

<sup>55</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 139.

<sup>56</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 139.

In verse four, Deborah is introduced "...a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel." Verse five gives information regarding her location "...used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim;" with the remainder of verse five (5b) showing her exercising her authority as judge, "and the Israelites came up to her for judgment." It is suggested by one scholar that "She probably lived about 1200 B.C. or slightly later during a period of Canaanite oppression."<sup>57</sup> In reference to her tribal connection, one scholar is of the opinion that "Though residing within the boundary of Benjamin (Jgs 4:5; cf. Jos 16:2; 18:13), Deborah was probably from the tribe of Ephraim, the most prominent tribe of northern Israel," but yet some "place her in the tribe of Issachar (Jgs 5:14, 15)."<sup>58</sup>

Martin states, "Deborah: the name is the Hebrew word for 'bee'."<sup>59</sup> The text suggests that Deborah was married "wife of Lappidoth" but one scholar claims that "Deborah's marital status is ambiguous."<sup>60</sup> Ackerman asserts "even if 'the wife of Lappidoth' is the correct translation, meaning that Judges 4 does understand Deborah as being married, it is striking that the Judges 4 text makes no mention of Deborah having children."<sup>61</sup> McCann states that "Deborah is further identified by phrase that NRSV translates as 'wife of Lappidoth' (4)" and goes further to state that "this may be correct;

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<sup>57</sup> Scalise, "Deborah," 408.

<sup>58</sup> Elwell and Beitzel, "Deborah," 605.

<sup>59</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

<sup>60</sup> Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 38.

<sup>61</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 38.

but the phrase can also be translated ‘woman of torches.’”<sup>62</sup> Adding to the ambiguity, McCann speculates that, “We hear nothing of Lappidoth, if this is indeed the name of Deborah’s husband.”<sup>63</sup>

Verse four also describes Deborah as a prophetess. Martin claims this “term is probably slightly anachronistic here, since prophecy does not emerge until later in Israel’s history.”<sup>64</sup> He is of the opinion that “the word is used here probably to mean that Deborah was regarded as an inspired servant of God.”<sup>65</sup> Contrary to this opinion, Ackerman states “She is first introduced in Judg 4:4 as a prophet and a judge” and further claims that “both titles indicate her role as someone who serves as an intermediary between the human world and the divine, bringing the word of God to the people of Israel.”<sup>66</sup> Another female scholar explains that Deborah “is a conduit to God, a vessel for divine communication of various kinds.”<sup>67</sup> Niditch also states “It is this inspirited, oracular gift that allows her to ‘judge’ leading on and off the battlefield.”<sup>68</sup> McCann brings to light that “where we expect the news that God ‘raised up’ (see 2:16, 3:9, 15) someone to judge, we get the beginning of the Deborah story (4:4).”<sup>69</sup> However, in Judges five, “In the Song of Deborah, her role is more clearly delineated” and “described

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<sup>62</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 51.

<sup>63</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 51.

<sup>64</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

<sup>65</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

<sup>66</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 29.

<sup>67</sup> Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 65.

<sup>68</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 65.

<sup>69</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 51.

as arising in 5:7, using the verb קָוַם (*qom*)—the same term used to introduce the other judges raised by Yahweh throughout the book.”<sup>70</sup> As previously stated in the contextual analysis, and noted here again for validity, “although Judges 4 appears first in the biblical text..., the poetic traditions of Judges 5 predate the Judges 4 prose by several centuries.”<sup>71</sup> It is noted by one scholar that “Deborah has the unique distinction of being not only the one female judge in the book, nor the only judge referred to as a prophet(ess) (4:4), but also the only leader in the entire Book of Judges whom we actually see judging the people.”<sup>72</sup> Sterman expounds further by saying “The fact that when we first meet her Deborah is described as sitting is both deliberate and important.”<sup>73</sup> Ackerman also noted it “as being so important that Deborah is even assigned a special location from which to carry out her work, a tree known as the palm of Deborah, located in the hill country of Ephraim between Ramah and Bethel.”<sup>74</sup> Another scholar points out “Lest there be any doubt as to her position, the text spells it out quite clearly: ‘and the Israelites came up to her for judgement’ (4:5).”<sup>75</sup>

The next six verses (vv.6-10) cover Deborah and Barak preparing for battle. Verse six declares that Deborah “sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali.” Younger states, “In 4:6, Barak (‘lightning’), the son of Abinoam of

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<sup>70</sup> Grafius, “Deborah the Judge,” 100.

<sup>71</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 30.

<sup>72</sup> Judy Taubes Sterman, “Themes in the Deborah Narrative (Judges 4-5),” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39 (January 1, 2011): 15-24, accessed November 5, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>73</sup> Sterman, “Themes in the Deborah narrative (Judges 4-5),” 20.

<sup>74</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 29.

<sup>75</sup> Lilliam R. Klein, *From Deborah to Esther* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 34.

Kedesh Naphtali, is introduced (note that Deborah ‘sends’ for him and then ‘commands’ him).<sup>76</sup> “Clearly she is the one who is taking the initiative, not Barak.”<sup>77</sup> Klein also notes that, “Deborah assumes a very masculine role when she ‘sent and summoned’ Barak to come to her (4:6).”<sup>78</sup> Ackerman maintains that “It is God’s mandate, Deborah declares in verses 6-7, that Barak assemble Israel’s militia and go forth to wage war against the forces of the Canaanites.”<sup>79</sup> Barak is instructed to “take ten thousand troops from his tribe and the neighboring tribe of Zebulun and march from a gathering point at Mount Tabor, in the northeast section of the Plain of Esdraelon, down to the torrent-valley (Wadi) of the river Kishon, and there Yhwh will flush out Sisera and his army in order to grant victory to the Israelites.”<sup>80</sup> The text uses the verbiage “I will give him into your hand, which “echoes similar words used for the preceding judges (3:10, 28).”<sup>81</sup> Following these words in each verse the text demonstrates the Israelites were victorious.

In verse eight, Barak responds to the command by God by saying “If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” Olson makes the observation that “Barak seeks the reassurance of Deborah’s presence with him as he goes out into battle; but if Deborah will not go with him, Barak will not go, in spite of God’s

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<sup>76</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 141.

<sup>77</sup> Younger, “Judges/Ruth,” 141.

<sup>78</sup> Klein, *From Deborah to Esther*, 34.

<sup>79</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 29.

<sup>80</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 65.

<sup>81</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:779-780.

direct command to him.”<sup>82</sup> McCann makes the following statement, expounding on vv.

6-7:

Not only does Deborah tell Barak what God ‘commands’ him to do (4:6-7), but also Barak treats Deborah as other Israelite combatants elsewhere treat the ark, the symbol of God’s presence and power. That is to say, it/she must accompany the armies into battle (see 1 Sam 4:1-3)! From this perspective, it seems that not only does Deborah speak for God; she also somehow embodies God’s presence, at least in Barak’s opinion.<sup>83</sup>

In verse nine, in response to Barak’s request, according to one scholar’s theory,

Deborah promised to accompany him, but announced to him as the punishment for this want of confidence in the success of his undertaking, that the prize of victory—namely, the defeat of the hostile general—should be taken out of his hand; for Jehovah would sell (i.e., deliver up) Sisera into the hand of a woman, viz., according to vv. 17ff., into the hand of Jael.<sup>84</sup>

As it pertained to who was to receive the glory, another scholar insists, “Barak no doubt thought she [Deborah] meant herself, but the statement was prophetic, anticipating the role of Jael (Jud. 4:21).”<sup>85</sup> Also noted by Sterman, in verse 9b, “No longer is she portrayed as ‘sitting’ and ‘sending’ and waiting for people to come to her; once she agrees to go with Barak (with the caveat that the honor of victory will no longer be his, but will now be in the hands of a woman, 4:9), the verbs associated with her change significantly.”<sup>86</sup> Sterman goes further to say “...she ‘rises up’ and ‘walks’..., she ‘goes up’ with Barak to the mountain (4:9), and in doing so transforms herself from immobile

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<sup>82</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:780.

<sup>83</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 52.

<sup>84</sup> Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 10 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 2:220.

<sup>85</sup> F. Duane Lindsey, “Judges,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 388.

<sup>86</sup> Sterman, *Themes in the Deborah Narrative*, 20.



to mobile, from passivity to activity.”<sup>87</sup> She once again states, “...this transformation involves abandoning the traditional portrayal of a judge, one who dispenses legal rulings, in favor of the distinctive portrayal found in the Book of Judges, a charismatic military leader.”<sup>88</sup> In verse ten, it states “Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh [Barak’s home according to vv.6].” Olson avers that “Deborah does go up with Barak to the place of battle at Kedesh, and Barak does summon his ten thousand warriors, so the stage is now set for the battle to begin (v. 10).”<sup>89</sup>

Verse eleven changes the subject to Heber the Kenite, depicted as one of “the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses [also note 1:16].” Olson states that verse eleven is “inserted between Israel’s preparing for battle (vv. 6-10) and Canaan’s preparing for battle (vv. 12-13).”<sup>90</sup> Another scholar brings to the attention that verse eleven is “introduced because of its importance in relation to the issue of the conflict which ensued (vv. 17ff).”<sup>91</sup> To depict further the character of Heber, McCann claims “Although the Kenites had historic ties with the Israelites by way of Moses, Heber the Kenite had gone his own way.”<sup>92</sup> McCann goes further with supporting his theory by stating “...‘Heber’ can mean ‘ally,’ and later we learn that Heber is allied with King Jabin (or perhaps, a vassal of King Jabin), Sisera’s boss and Israel’s enemy.”<sup>93</sup> The latter

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<sup>87</sup> Sterman, *Themes in the Deborah Narrative*, 21.

<sup>88</sup> Sterman, *Themes in the Deborah Narrative*, 21.

<sup>89</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:780.

<sup>90</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:781.

<sup>91</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 2:221.

<sup>92</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 53.

<sup>93</sup> McCann, “Judges,” 53.

part of verse eleven reflects Heber's location "...encamped as far away as Elon-bezaananim, which is near Kedesh." Olson concludes that, "Heber's placement between Israel and Canaan signifies his ambiguous position on the narrative boundary between them."<sup>94</sup> Heber's location will play a major role in this narrative in verse seventeen.

In verses twelve and thirteen, the text resumes with Sisera preparing for battle. Verse twelve indicates, "Sisera was told that Barak...had gone up to Mount Tabor." Daniel Block speculates the possibility "Heber passed on the word that Barak had assembled his troops or that Jabin had observed them move from Kedesh to Mount Tabor and had relayed orders to Sisera to mobilize."<sup>95</sup> As a result of Sisera being informed, he "...called out all his chariots...and all the troops who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the Wadi Kishon." According to Martin, "Sisera's place of origin was Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles, probably a Canaanite city-state lying north-west of Megiddo, just under the Camel Ridge."<sup>96</sup> If this location is correct, Martin states "then he moved his troops south-eastwards, to the neighbourhood of Taanach and Megiddo according to 5:19."<sup>97</sup> Younger asserts that these verses "leave the impression that Sisera is functioning on his own (or Jabin's) initiative, but the reader knows from v. 7 that Yahweh is setting the stage for the showdown."<sup>98</sup> Martin put it another way by saying "What was attributed

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<sup>94</sup> Olson, "The Book of Judges," 2:781.

<sup>95</sup> Daniel I. Block, "Judges, Ruth," *The New American Commentary*, vol. 6 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 203.

<sup>96</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 55.

<sup>97</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 59.

<sup>98</sup> Younger, "Judges/Ruth," 142.

to the direct instigation of God in verse 7 is here presented as the reaction of Sisera to the news that Barak had gathered his forces on Mount Tabor.”<sup>99</sup>

Verse fourteen returns the attention back to Deborah and Barak when “Deborah speaks an oracle of divine encouragement to Barak: ‘Up.’”<sup>100</sup> According to Block, “The call to action, “Arise” (*qûm*, NIV, “Go!”) is ambiguous, leaving open the question whether the Israelites are to go on the offensive or simply to stand by and watch the salvation of Yahweh.”<sup>101</sup> Block raised the following observations regarding this verse: “The narrator records no call to attack, only Deborah’s declaration that the day for God to deliver...” and further observes that “...she [Deborah] does not address the troops; instead of calling Barak to follow her, she declares that Yahweh assuredly goes before him.”<sup>102</sup> In the NIV, verse fourteen asks a rhetorical question of, “Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?” Klein considers this a “contradiction between Deborah’s earlier statement and this one: earlier she said that a woman would conquer Sisera and now that Barak will conquer Sisera.”<sup>103</sup> Klein theorizes further by saying this “narrative suggests that Deborah has seen, in prophesy, all that will transpire, which allows her to speak with the utmost authority of the outcome of the day’s events, describing them in the past tense because she has already seen them happen.”<sup>104</sup> The text (14b) reflects Barak proceeded with going “down Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.” Ackerman noted

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<sup>99</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 59.

<sup>100</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:781.

<sup>101</sup> Block, “Judges, Ruth,” 204.

<sup>102</sup> Block, “Judges, Ruth,” 204.

<sup>103</sup> Klein, *From Deborah to Esther*, 36.

<sup>104</sup> Klein, *From Deborah to Esther*, 36.

this fact about verse fourteen: “although the narrative continues for another eight verses (through v 24), Deborah never again appears in the Judges 4 text.”<sup>105</sup>

In verses fifteen and sixteen the text shows the battle has begun “at the foot of Mount Tabor, which was as far as the chariots of Sisera could safely go (they were unable to operate in the hill country).”<sup>106</sup> One scholar suggested, “this strategy seemed to favor Sisera, for it allowed him to fight where his iron chariots could be used to their greatest advantage—in the level valley rather than on the slopes of the mountain.”<sup>107</sup> Verse fifteen (KJV) states “the Lord discomfited Sisera” which means in “*Hebrew*, “threw his army into confusion”; men, horses, and chariots being intermingled in wild confusion,” asserting further that this “disorder was produced by a supernatural panic (see on Jdg 5:20).”<sup>108</sup> In the NIV, verse 15a reads “At Barak’s advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword.” As one scholar would suggest, “The means used by God were both human (by the sword) and divine (bringing an unseasonable and violent storm that mired the chariots in the floodwaters of the Kishon; cf. 5:20–22).”<sup>109</sup> Olson correlates this incident to what “the Lord had done against Pharaoh and his chariots in the Exodus from Egypt (Exod 14:24).”<sup>110</sup> In keeping with the prophecy of Deborah (vv. 9), Sisera was not captured but “got down from his chariot and

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<sup>105</sup> Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen*, 30.

<sup>106</sup> Myers, “The Book of Judges,” 712.

<sup>107</sup> Douglas Redford, *The History of Israel*, vol. 2 (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2008), 43.

<sup>108</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 161.

<sup>109</sup> Lindsey, “Judges,” 389.

<sup>110</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:781.

fled away on foot.” Verse sixteen reflects “Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-ha-goiim...” and “there he [Barak] subjects it to the total destruction or ‘ban’ which is one of the characteristic motifs of the holy war.”<sup>111</sup>

Verses seventeen through twenty-four, “Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite” emerges, Deborah’s prophesy (vv. 9) comes into fruition and Sisera is killed by a woman [Jael]. Also see Judges 5:24-27. Note that Barak disappears from the narrative (until vv. 22) but when he re-emerges, Sisera has already been killed by Jael. In the last two verses (vv. 23-24) the name of King Jabin of Canaan resurfaces, showing that he had been destroyed.

### *Synthesis*

This text demonstrates the importance of operating in your gift of leadership as God so desires, calls and ordains. Deborah operated in her gift of leadership of prophecy and judge. She was visible, vocal, authoritative, authentic and respected in her leadership position. Deborah did not stand in her own power but in the power of God which made her successful in carrying out her leadership assignment during an era where there was no visible female leadership, other than Miriam, Moses’ sister. To go even further, Deborah was solely leading (judging) Israel, making this even more unique in comparison to Miriam because Miriam did not solely lead but served in conjunction with her brothers, Moses and Aaron. This Old Testament biblical paradigm is relevant to this model of ministry because it demonstrates God using a woman in a unique, visible leadership capacity. The model of ministry set forth entitled “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion” is to help catapult African American women in ministry to their

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<sup>111</sup> Martin, *The Book of Judges*, 60.

next level of ministry assignment, who, much like Deborah, are called by God to serve in unique leadership positions in the twenty first century.

### *Reflection*

In examining the leadership of Deborah, twenty first century leaders can learn from her leadership. Deborah was chosen by God for the assignment of prophetess and judge which can be witnessed in the text. As previously demonstrated, various scholars de-emphasized Deborah's leadership roles making them rather ambiguous. However, other scholars recognized Deborah's leadership roles, referring back to the text, which shows her carrying out her leadership assignment as prophetess and judge. It would appear in the text that Deborah was secure in her assignment as she served with boldness. This speaks to leadership today because an effective leader is secure in their role and operates in boldness. Ministry assignments are not always easy, especially in this ministry context, but then again neither was Deborah's. Deborah was judging at the time when the Israelites were being oppressed by the Canaanites. Verse four says that the Canaanites had "...nine hundred chariots of iron" which would have given them the advantage and allowed them to cruelly oppress the Israelites. This treatment had been going on for twenty years. Prior to this, Israel had eighty years of peace. Deborah was raised up in the midst of oppression, functioning as both prophetess and judge.

Deborah was one of twelve judges in the Old Testament book of Judges. The only judge that judged longer than Deborah was Ehud who judged for eighty years (3:30). Deborah, along with Othniel (3:11) and Gideon (8:28) judged for forty years. Much like Israel being oppressed by the Canaanites during Deborah's leadership, God

caused the Israelites to suffer at the hands of various enemies; judges were raised to lead and deliver Israel, and then they enjoyed peace. The number of years at peace depended on the obedience of Israel. Other than Deborah, the only judge that served a dual role as prophet was Gideon (6:7). What makes Deborah unique is that she was the only female judge and she was the only judge that is witnessed in the text judging the people (vv.5).

Deborah was also unique in that her role as prophetess and judge rendered her visible, vocal, and authoritative. She was also positioned to carry out her assignment. As previously stated, Deborah was sitting under a tree, “the palm of Deborah,” and the people would come to her and she would judge disputes. Also, she summoned Barak, while she sat, indicating that she was a person of authority. Deborah had the authority, given by God, when she delivered the oracles. Being vocal, visible and authoritative came with Deborah’s assignment. Plus, she was in position to carry out her assignment.

In this model of ministry of African American, female seminary trained leaders, the same characteristics are required. This model is not to formulate or to give leadership to a committee but to motivate leaders to embrace their passion and to move and operate in areas ordained by God. These are leadership positions that require one to be visible, vocal and authoritative that not only effect the life of the leader but effect the lives of others.

In Judges 5:7, Deborah is also depicted as “a mother in Israel.” It reads “The peasantry prospered in Israel, they grew fat on plunder, because you arose, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.” The NIV reads “Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.” According to Olson, “The NIV may be closer than the NRSV to the meaning of v. 7a: The normal life of Israel's

peasantry ceased.”<sup>112</sup> He expounds further by saying “This negative situation continued ‘until’ (NIV) Deborah arose ‘as a mother in Israel.’”<sup>113</sup> Olson addresses the phrase “mother in Israel” as “probably more than just an endearing title” but rather it “may represent the place and office of a wise woman prophet who delivers divine oracles to resolve disputes.”<sup>114</sup>

The role of prophet, judge and mother all require some degree of wisdom in order to effectively operate within that role. If one would consider the role of Deborah, “mother in Israel,” especially during the time the Israelites were being oppressed, it was very significant. Mothers are people who love, protect, encourage, and nurture, just to name a few, which would appear valuable at that time in the life of the oppressed people of Israel. It can be witnessed in the text, which person, Barak or Deborah, had the character to give Israel what was needed. By the people coming to Deborah to settle disputes, it is evident that they had put some level of trust in her. God chose Deborah to arise, to give leadership, and to answer the call of taking care of Israel.

In this ministry model of “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion,” each person has a God given assignment with gifting to accompany the assignment. Because this is a God given assignment and gifting, it is important that each person operate in this assignment, whether it be, pastoring, leading a movement involving justice, or creating ministries of empowerment. Just as Deborah was raised up (based on 5:7), women in this context have also been raised up to serve as trailblazers and catalyst

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<sup>112</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:787.

<sup>113</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:787.

<sup>114</sup> Olson, “The Book of Judges,” 2:787.



for change; raised up for the purpose of leading, teaching, training, empowering, protecting, nurturing, and encouraging the people of God. This is being said in a positive light, because now trained women in this context, are in a position to move into arenas where there have been little female representation, much like Deborah. Not necessarily to make a statement or to compete with male counterparts, but to move into areas with the major emphasis and focus on carrying out the God given assignment.

Also demonstrated in this text is Deborah's submission to God, which can be very much implied or witnessed through her actions. In the text, she can be witnessed, as the prophetess, delivering oracles to Barak from God. This would suggest that Deborah was the earthly leader and that God is the true leader; the divine leader. The text also demonstrates Deborah judging the people of Israel, using wisdom to rightly judge. One could make a valid argument that Deborah's prophetic gift was an asset to her assignment as judge over Israel. In this ministry context there are only servant leaders, and acknowledging God as the divine leader, the true leader, is the only avenue that can lead to success. It would be safe to assume that the servant leader's pursuit of passion is connected to or birthed out of the calling or will of the divine leader.

Deborah was respected and acknowledged in her leadership position by Barak. In verse six and seven, Deborah summoned Barak and delivered a message from God commanding Barak to "go, take position at Mount Tabor." Barak was also to bring ten thousand men from his tribe of Naphtali and "the neighboring tribe of Zebulun."<sup>115</sup> God was initiating a battle with the enemy to address Israel's oppression by the Canaanites. In initiating this battle, God gave specific and strategic instructions, for a victorious battle.

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<sup>115</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 65.

In looking at verse seven it is obvious that the battle was already won. This was conveyed to Barak on the front end so that he would not have to wonder whether or not he would have success. However, in verse eight, it is unclear as to whether Barak had that understanding because of his response. Barak's responds by requesting Deborah's presence in battle or he will not go. This is the only speaking part for Barak in this chapter of Judges. The remaining verses Barak can be witnessed in action. It would appear that Barak's obedience is contingent upon Deborah's presence. The victory is guaranteed but yet, Barak will not go without Deborah.

Some scholars have compared Deborah's presence equivalent to the Ark of the Covenant because it symbolizes the presence of God. One would have to ponder whether Barak placed the presence of Deborah over the word of God. It is obvious that Deborah's presence had major significance to Barak. However, what was the condition of Barak's faith? It would appear that Barak had a parasitic faith, which had its dependence on the faith of Deborah. To go even further, after Deborah told him that she would go but this "...will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman," Barak received the conditions of the oracle and made preparation to proceed in battle. Barak responded as if him getting the glory had no significance. After Deborah deliver the oracle in verse nine, then she arose from her position, "under the palm tree of Deborah," to accompany Barak into battle. Deborah did not leave the office of judge and prophetess but temporarily left her post for what appears to be the greater good. She may or may not have fought the battle at Wadi Kishon (vv.8, 13) but she was willing to go up to Mount Tabor (vv.9) where Barak and his men were being positioned for battle.

Deborah recognized what Barak truly needed and accompanied him with her motivating presence. This is a good example because there are times when leaders need to be present to help or motivate other leaders to get into position, which is what this ministry model is all about. A true test of a leader is if they can look beyond self and see the greater good. God gives assignments and authority with a purpose, and being able to recognize this allows one to operate as a leader like Deborah recognizing that she had what Barak lacked. The bottom line was that obedience to the command of God needed to take place in order for there to be victory over the enemy, and if it meant that Deborah had to go in order for that to happen, then so be it.

Barak was not the only leader who lacked faith in God. There were judges that led after Deborah, who were hesitant in pursuing the enemy. As expounded by Olson, the "...need for divine assurance or a sign will become more prominent in the stories of Gideon (6:36-40) and Jephthah (11:29-33)."<sup>116</sup> Further, he states, "Increasingly, the leaders of Israel will be less trusting and require more divine guarantees to bolster their confidence."<sup>117</sup> The lack of faith of these judges can only be contrasted with that of Barak. As witnessed in the text, the faith of Deborah was intact and she carried out her assignment according to what God had called and commanded.

In verse eleven, Heber the Kenite is introduced, who is the husband of Jael, descendant of the father-in-law of Moses, and actually an ally to Sisera, Israel's oppressor. Heber was encamped near Kedesh, keeping in mind that Barak had summoned his troops to Kedesh and then led them up to Mount Tabor, along with

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<sup>116</sup> Olson, "The Book of Judges," 2:776.

<sup>117</sup> Olson, "The Book of Judges," 2:776.

Deborah, in preparation for battle (v9b-10). In verse twelve it reflects that Sisera was told that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor. Based on verse eleven, it is very possible that the informant was Heber because of the location of his encampment, near Kadesh. As a result, Sisera summoned his “nine hundred iron chariots and all the troops” and they were going to Wadi Kishon, which is the meeting place where God said that he would draw out the enemy and give them into Barak’s hands (v7), so everything is falling into place for the victory.

In verse fourteen, the day had arrived for the victory to take place. Deborah’s words to Barak in the NIV (v14a) was “Go! This is the day the Lord will deliver Sisera into your hands.” Her words were prophetic words of victory and served as a reminder that this battle had already been won. It may have been Deborah’s way of offering continued motivation to Barak. In the remaining part of that verse (14b), Deborah poses a rhetorical question to Barak, “Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?” Once again, keeping before Barak, this is a victory. Then Barak went to battle with his ten thousand men to meet the enemy at Wadi Kishon. Verse fourteen is the last speaking part for Deborah and the last of her presence in this chapter. This verse does not say that Deborah went down the mountain with Barak into the battle. It is possible that her mountain top presence may have been to encourage Barak but her battle presence was not needed because the presence of God was already there. With any leader there is time to encourage and motivate, but then there is a time for release to ensure the dependence is not on the leader but on God. The goal is to motivate and then release, at the appointed time, which is the aim of this ministry model.

Going into battle, Israel was the underdog with ten thousand men, compared to Canaan's nine hundred chariots and troops. The battle could not take place as long as Barak and his men were in the mountain because the enemy were in chariots and would not have been able to go up the mountain. It would appear that when Israel went down the mountain to fight, they were at a disadvantage because the Canaanites were a stronger military force. Then in verse fifteen, an omnipresent God makes God's presence known and throws the enemy into a panic. To help gain some understanding to this panic, one would have to refer back to a couple of the scholarly theories.

According to Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, verse fifteen (KJV) states "the Lord discomfited Sisera" which means in "*Hebrew*, "threw his army into confusion;" men, horses, and chariots being intermingled in wild confusion," asserting further that this "disorder was produced by a supernatural panic (see on Jdg 5:20)."<sup>118</sup> Another scholar goes further to say "The means used by God were both human (by the sword) and divine (bringing an unseasonable and violent storm that mired the chariots in the floodwaters of the Kishon; cf. 5:20–22)."<sup>119</sup> God went before Israel by causing the torrential water and as a result, the means used by the enemy to oppress Israel had been made impotent, giving Israel the upper hand and the victory. Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army got away and as prophesied by Deborah (v. 9), the glory went to a woman. It was Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, who killed Sisera (vv. 17–22). In looking back at verse fourteen, it would appear that Deborah contradicted herself when she told Barak "this is the day the Lord will deliver Sisera into your hands" in light

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<sup>118</sup> Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 161.

<sup>119</sup> Lindsey, "Judges," 389.

of what was prophesied in verse nine and in light of what actually took place in verses twenty-one and twenty-two.

In light of Judges 5, the poetic song, there are some things that Deborah conveyed in this chapter that may not have been obvious from reading Judges 4, the prose. In this poetic song, it celebrates and remembers what God had done in giving victory over the enemy. Deborah talks about the condition of Israel, the unsafe travel; they would not fight until she arose as a mother in Israel. She remembers the commanders of Israel, who served willingly. She speaks of the tribes who fought the battle, Naphtali and Zebulun, but also the other tribes (Ephraim, Benjamin and Issachar) that came to assist in battle. She also recalls those tribes (Reuben, Dan and Asher) that decided not to assist in battle. Going further, Deborah describes how the stars from heaven fought against Sisera and shares about the torrent that took place at the battle that swept the enemy away. Deborah moves to praise Jael “most blessed of women” and describes how she killed Sisera. Deborah brings Sisera’s mother into the poem, who Deborah feels is waiting for the return of her son, pondering reasons for him being detained. Deborah then breaks into a praise.

Based on the story of Deborah, this would speak life into any woman in ministry because it shows how God can raise up and use anyone, for God’s purpose and God’s glory. This would encourage women in ministry to embrace and passionately pursue that which God has called them to do.

## New Testament

The New Testament biblical foundation depicts another woman used by God for an extraordinary assignment, which will help shine light on this ministry model. The New Testament text is Luke 1:26-38 and it states,

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

### *Introduction*

In this New Testament text of Luke 1:26-38, the angel, Gabriel, was sent by God to a virgin named Mary. In this passage, Gabriel makes the announcement that Mary had "found favor with God" and that she will "conceive in her womb and bear a son." Gabriel then provides insight regarding what his name will be, his true identity, including his lineage, his authority, and how this conception will occur. This text shows Mary being chosen by God, to be used in a unique and unusual way, to bring forth a miracle that would affect the whole world. Her response to the plan of God was "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

This text has significance to the context for this model of ministry because as a servant of God, like Mary, the correct response to an assignment by God is “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” In this ministry model, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion,” it is about responding like Mary. As a result, the servant of God is in position to be used in a way that reaches beyond being the recipient of a blessing, but rather, to the blessing of others. There is a need to motivate trained women to embrace their passion, gift and calling so that they will be positioned for greater works, including giving birth to ministries that are consistent with the will of God.

### *Contextual Analysis*

The Gospel of Luke’s “author is anonymous; it does not indicate who wrote it or where or when it was written.”<sup>120</sup> The scholar goes further to say “Even if one takes the NT references to Luke at face value and agrees that Luke was the author of Luke and Acts and that the “we” sections report Luke’s firsthand experiences, the NT does not tell us how much Luke was influenced by Paul’s thought.”<sup>121</sup> Another scholar is of similar thought, that Luke and Paul “were not co-workers” and further states that “some scholars explain these discrepancies by suggesting that Paul and Luke only collaborated for a short time, and thus Luke did not know Paul’s theology very well.”<sup>122</sup> To address the profession of Luke, Sharon Ringe’s theory would suggest that, “Corroborating evidence

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<sup>120</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>121</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 5.

<sup>122</sup> Sharon Ringe, “Luke,” in *Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 19.



of medical terms and insights that would fit the profession of physician also does not hold up.”<sup>123</sup> Ringe also states “Luke’s careful use of language, his sometimes elegant style, his familiarity with both the content and style of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint...mark him as a well-educated person.”<sup>124</sup> Ringe then “conclude[s] that the author of both the third Gospel and the book of Acts-like the authors of the other Gospels-is anonymous.”<sup>125</sup> Another scholar suggests that “Until modern times church tradition uniformly has held Luke to be the author of Luke and Acts.”<sup>126</sup> This scholar appears to embrace Luke as the author by asserting that, “two books attributed to Luke (Luke and Acts) make up about 28 percent of the Greek New Testament.”<sup>127</sup> John Martin further suggests that “Luke must have been a Gentile for Paul differentiates him from the Jews (Col. 4:10–14)” and “Paul referred to Luke as a physician (Col. 4:14), a fact which many try to corroborate from passages in Luke and Acts.”<sup>128</sup> There are various theories regarding authorship of this book. In light of same, this writing will refer to the author as Luke since the book is entitled Luke.

As it relates to the date of this book, “Many date this book after A.D. 70, usually in the mid-eighties, based on the fact that the texts on the judgment of the nation are so

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<sup>123</sup> Ringe, “Luke,” 19.

<sup>124</sup> Ringe, “Luke,” 19.

<sup>125</sup> Ringe, “Luke,” 19.

<sup>126</sup> John A. Martin, “Luke,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 198-199.

<sup>127</sup> Martin, “Luke,” 198-199.

<sup>128</sup> Martin, “Luke,” 198-199.

specific about Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24)."<sup>129</sup> Darrell Bock states that "A more likely date is some time in the sixties" and further states "The last event in Acts is dated A.D. 62; since Luke appears to be closely related to Acts, the release of the two volumes would have been fairly close to each other."<sup>130</sup> Other experts suggest, "The *time* and *place* of the publication of his Gospel are alike uncertain...we can approximate to it."<sup>131</sup> The experts say that, "It must at any rate have been issued before the Acts, for there the 'Gospel' is expressly referred to as the same author's "former treatise" (Ac 1:1)."<sup>132</sup> The experts further explain that "the Book of the Acts was not published for two whole years after Paul's arrival as a prisoner at Rome, for it concludes with a reference to this period; but probably it was published soon after that, which would appear to have been early in the year 63."<sup>133</sup> The experts conclude with "If we date it somewhere between A.D. 50 and 60, we shall probably be near the truth."<sup>134</sup>

Luke is one of "four Gospels among the 27 writings of the New Testament."<sup>135</sup> Of the four, "Three of them (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are called the 'Synoptic' Gospels because they parallel each other so closely they can be 'seen together' (*syn* means

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<sup>129</sup> Darrell L. Bock, "Luke," in *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 20.

<sup>130</sup> Bock, "Luke," 20.

<sup>131</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 95.

<sup>132</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 95.

<sup>133</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 95.

<sup>134</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory*, 95.

<sup>135</sup> Craig A. Evans, "Luke," in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1990), 3.

‘together’; *optic* means ‘see’).”<sup>136</sup> It appears this would have significance regarding source material for Luke. One scholar maintains that, “While the structure of the Gospel of Luke is similar to the Greco-Roman history and biography, its contents make it apparent that the writer has access to Mark’s Gospel and to sayings source, often labeled simply as ‘Q’ (from *Quelle*, the German word for ‘source’).”<sup>137</sup> Buckhanon Crowder further expounds that, “In addition to material from Mark and Q, much of the content of this Gospel is unique to Luke (chaps. 22-24); this is often labeled ‘L’.”<sup>138</sup> Another scholar suggests that “one must be careful not to limit one’s investigation of the Lukan purpose and theology to his editing of Mark, Q, and L; for this would reveal primarily what is ‘unique’ to Luke, but not the emphasis of his entire Gospel.”<sup>139</sup> The scholar’s rationale for this is “The redaction critic who focuses attention only on the unique emphases of Luke will understand “Lukan theology” less well than the individual who simply reads Luke 1:1–24:53 and seeks to understand the meaning of the entire work.”<sup>140</sup>

Concerning the purpose of Gospel of Luke, one scholar suggests:

We are singularly fortunate in that Luke has given us his own statement of intention at the beginning of the Gospel. At the same time we can draw certain conclusions from the character of the work itself. His concern was to present the story of Jesus in such a way as to bring out its significance and its reliability for those who believed in him; and he did this in the context of a two-part work which went on to tell the story of the early church so as to demonstrate how the

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<sup>136</sup> Evans, “Luke,” 3.

<sup>137</sup> Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, “The Gospel of Luke,” in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 159.

<sup>138</sup> Crowder, “The Gospel of Luke,” 159.

<sup>139</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 59.

<sup>140</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 59–60.

message of the gospel spread, in accordance with prophecy and God's command, to the ends of the earth and brought salvation to those who responded to it.<sup>141</sup>

"The Gospel of Luke "begins with a literary prologue that confirms the author's qualifications and guarantees the reliability of the biography" and it is "distinguished both by its content and by its style."<sup>142</sup> As it relates to the identity of the addressee, one scholar claims, "...this 'God lover' (the meaning of 'Theophilus') is unknown to us; we are not even sure whether he was an individual or the symbol for Luke's readers."<sup>143</sup> The scholar further suggests "The implication of 'the things of which you have been informed' (Luke 1:4) is that the reader knows of the Christian movement...the phrase suggests that the reader is a member of a Christian movement, one prominent enough to merit the honorific title of 'Excellent' and wealthy enough to sponsor publication."<sup>144</sup> The structure of Luke is as follows: "Luke 1:1-4, the prologue; 1:5-2:52, the infancy narrative; 3:1-4:13 preparation for the ministry of Jesus; 4:14-9:50, the ministry in Galilee; 9:51-19:27, the journey to Jerusalem; 19:28-21:38, the ministry in Jerusalem; and 22:1-24:53, the passion and resurrection narratives."<sup>145</sup> The selected text (1:26-38) falls within the infancy narrative, namely, the annunciation of Christ against the backdrop of the annunciation of John the Baptist. There are two characters in this narrative, which include Gabriel and Mary. The narrative is broken down as follows: Gabriel's

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<sup>141</sup> Howard Marshall and D. R. W. Wood, "Gospel of Luke," in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, UK; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 705.

<sup>142</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," 10.

<sup>143</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, "Luke-Acts," in *Writings of the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 214.

<sup>144</sup> Johnson, "Luke-Acts," 214.

<sup>145</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," 10.

appearance and greeting to Mary (vv. 26-29); Gabriel's announcement to Mary (vv. 30-33); the inquisitiveness of Mary's and Gabriel's response (vv. 34-35); Gabriel's news about Elizabeth (vv.36-37); and Mary's response of obedience (vv.38).

### *Detailed Analysis*

The selected text opens on the backdrop of the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist (1:5-25). Stein reports "This account is tied to the first [1:5-25] not only by the parallelism between the two accounts but also by the mention of the sixth month (1:26) and of two of the main characters from the previous account: the angel Gabriel (1:26ff.) and Elizabeth (1:36-37)."<sup>146</sup> According to one scholar the meaning of Gabriel is "man of God" and is described as "the messenger of peace and restoration."<sup>147</sup>

Culpepper explains that:

The angel Gabriel appears to announce the birth of the child, and the annunciation follows the pattern of birth annunciations in the OT: The angel says, "Do not be afraid," calls the recipient of the vision by name, assures him or her of God's favor, announces the birth of the child, discloses the name of the child to be born, and reveals the future role of the child in language drawn from the Scriptures.<sup>148</sup>

Gabriel's "first announcement takes place in the temple in the center of Israelite culture, this one takes place in an obscure Galilean village much to the north of the capital."<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Stein, "Luke," 80-81.

<sup>147</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 256.

<sup>148</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," 50.

<sup>149</sup> Bock, "Luke," 56.

Bock further state, “Galilee was not a respected region” and “hardly the expected locale for one sent from God (John 7:41).”<sup>150</sup>

In vv. 27 “Luke identifies Mary as a virgin, engaged to Joseph; that is, she was pledged to him sometime in the previous year.”<sup>151</sup> To help bring clarity, another scholar writes, “the Jewish betrothal was public and had vows that constituted virtual marriage and needed only that the bridegroom should come at the set time, take his bride, celebrate, and live with her.”<sup>152</sup> According to Bock, “Mary’s age is not given, but in this culture she could be as young as twelve. Another scholar maintains what is known about Mary is that “she was a Jewess of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David, and a virgin (Isa. 7:14); she was engaged to a carpenter in Nazareth named Joseph (Matt. 13:55), and apparently both of them were poor (Lev. 12:8; Luke 2:24).”<sup>153</sup> In this same verse, Joseph is described as “a descendant of the house of David.” One scholar explains that, “It is significant that Joseph is a descendant of David (v. 27), for that ancestry qualifies Jesus for his messianic role and makes what Gabriel says in vv. 32-33 possible.”<sup>154</sup> Another scholar brings to light “in Luke’s account Joseph never comes into the picture— except as the one through whom the Davidic ancestry of Jesus is traced.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Bock, “Luke,” 57.

<sup>151</sup> Bock, “Luke,” 57.

<sup>152</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 60.

<sup>153</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 172.

<sup>154</sup> Evans, “Luke,” 25.

<sup>155</sup> D. Moody Smith, “Mary, Virgin -- Annunciation; Bible. Luke 1-4; Advent,” *Interpretation* 29, no. 4 (October 1975): 413, accessed November 20, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

In vv. 28 Gabriel greets Mary with the words “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” Mary is depicted as “the highly favored one—the recipient of a special blessing from God.”<sup>156</sup> The scholar suggests that “It singles her out as a special instrument whom God chose to use in his gracious plan of salvation” and “the grace Mary received was God’s presence with her.”<sup>157</sup> In vv. 29 shows Mary response to the words of Gabriel. As a result of Gabriel words “Mary stirred these thoughts around in her mind, trying to find a meaning to them and the steps to take in light of them.”<sup>158</sup> A scholar suggested that, “Luke uses *Siata-paxthe*, the only appearance of the word in the New Testament” and that “It describes something thoroughly stirred up, confused, and perplexed.”<sup>159</sup> Another scholar maintains, “Mary’s surprise was not primarily because it was not customary for a man to greet a woman but because it was not customary for an *angel* to greet a woman.”<sup>160</sup>

In vv. 30, Gabriel responds to Mary’s perplexity and curiosity. Butler asserts that “The heavenly messenger understood her troubled mind, so the angel repeated the comforting words Zechariah had heard (v. 13): Do not be afraid.”<sup>161</sup> Culpepper maintains that, “Immediately, the angel reassures Mary with the all-important promise that she had found favor with God.”<sup>162</sup> Stein brings to light that “Here as in Judg 6:17; 2

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<sup>156</sup> Trent Butler, “Luke,” in *Holman New Testament Commentary*, vol. 3 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000), 11.

<sup>157</sup> Butler, “Luke,” 11.

<sup>158</sup> Butler, “Luke,” 11.

<sup>159</sup> Butler, “Luke,” 11.

<sup>160</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 83.

<sup>161</sup> Butler, “Luke,” 11.

<sup>162</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

Sam 15:25 (cf. 1 Sam 1:18) the issue is God's gracious choice, not Mary's particular piety (cf. Gen 6:8); for unlike Luke 1:6, nothing is made of Mary's personal piety either before or after this verse."<sup>163</sup> He adds, "The emphasis is on God's sovereign choice, not on human acceptability."<sup>164</sup>

In vv. 31 Gabriel proceeds with the announcement that Mary would "conceive in her womb and bear a son." Ringe contrasts the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as it relates to the annunciation. Ringe claims that "while the annunciation in Matthew refers to a pregnancy already under way, in Luke the verbs are in the future tense: She will conceive."<sup>165</sup> She asserts further that "Nothing is to prevent the interpretation that the pregnancy will occur in due order, after the home-taking, with Joseph as the promised child's father."<sup>166</sup> The scholar justifies this by claiming "Such a reading is supported by the promise that the child will be given 'the throne of his ancestor David' (1:32), to which lineage Joseph is the crucial link (1:27)."<sup>167</sup> Another expert negates Ringe's theory by explaining that "For the author, the virgin birth is an indication of God's purpose and power at the very beginning of Jesus' life, and this wondrous beginning does not compete with the view that he is Son of God as Davidic king but attributes his kingship to prevenient divine action."<sup>168</sup> Continuing with vv. 31, Mary was to "name

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<sup>163</sup> Stein, "Luke," 83.

<sup>164</sup> Stein, "Luke," 83.

<sup>165</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 31-32.

<sup>166</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 32.

<sup>167</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 32.

<sup>168</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *The Native Unity of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986),



him Jesus.” The name “Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Semitic ‘Joshua’ which means ‘the Lord is salvation.’”<sup>169</sup> It becomes clear that “The explanation that followed the announcement told of Jesus' role in God's plan.”<sup>170</sup>

In vv. 32, “Mary is then told of the greatness of the child to come in a manner that recalls the birth announcements of the Old Testament (Gen. 16:11; Judg. 13:5; Isa. 7:14).”<sup>171</sup> In comparing Jesus and John, Culpepper made the following contrasts: John, who would prepare the people (1:16-17), Jesus would be called “the Son of the Most High” (v. 32); Jesus would be superior to John...even though John came first.”<sup>172</sup> Another scholar noted that “While John ‘will be called prophet of the Most High’ (1:76), Jesus ‘will be called Son of the Most High’ and will reign as king (1:32-33).”<sup>173</sup> As these verses (vv. 32-33) relate to Old Testament promises, Culpepper writes,

Again, we hear echoes of past promises. Second Samuel records the promise, “I will make for you a great name” (7:9 NRSV), and Gabriel confirmed, “He will be great” (v. 32). In 2 Samuel, the prophet Nathan was told that through David's son God would “establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (7:13 NRSV). Similarly, the angel announced that Mary's child would “reign over the house of Jacob forever” (v. 33). The same OT passage records God's promise, “I will be his father, and he will be my son” (7:14 NIV). God's promises to David, therefore, were about to be fulfilled in a way David could not have imagined. Jesus' kingdom, however, would not be an earthly, political reign but a spiritual kingdom that would never end.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> S. MacLean Gilmour, “The Gospel According to St. Luke,” in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8 (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1952), 37.

<sup>170</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

<sup>171</sup> Bock, “Luke,” 57.

<sup>172</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

<sup>173</sup> Tannehill, *The Native Unity of Luke-Acts*, 25.

<sup>174</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

In vv. 34, Mary speaks for the first time in the selected text to pose a question to Gabriel. In the opinion of Evans, “‘How can this be?’ (v34) carries no connotation of unbelief.”<sup>175</sup> He goes further to explain, “Since Mary is only engaged to Joseph and is therefore still a virgin (see v. 27; 2:5) her question is a natural one.”<sup>176</sup> Another scholar adds, “It seems that her question indicated less doubt as to the truth of what Gabriel said than a sense of wonder that such a thing could be. It was further stated that Mary’s ‘question deserved an answer and did not call forth any kind of reprimand.’”<sup>177</sup> However, on the contrary, “when Zechariah questioned Gabriel’s promise to him of a miraculous birth, he was struck dumb (Luke 1:18–20)” because “He did not believe the angelic announcement and even asked for a sign by which he could believe.”<sup>178</sup> Another consideration in Mary’s favor is that “unlike Zacharias whose only difficulty was his age, Mary had no ancient analogous cases to help her out, and the angel had intimated nothing whatever about how she would become a mother.”<sup>179</sup>

In vv. 35, Gabriel is responding to Mary’s question. Culpepper declares, “Gabriel’s response emphasizes that the baby would be born by the power of God.”<sup>180</sup> He compares it to “the presence of God in the cloud at the transfiguration (9:34), the Holy Spirit would come upon her and overshadow her.”<sup>181</sup> He concludes that, “The

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<sup>175</sup> Evans, “Luke,” 26.

<sup>176</sup> Evans, “Luke,” 26.

<sup>177</sup> Douglas Redford, *The Life and Ministry of Jesus: The Gospels*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Pub., 2007), 35-36.

<sup>178</sup> Redford, *The Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 35.

<sup>179</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel*, 69.

<sup>180</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

<sup>181</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 51.

Lukan account repeatedly affirms that Mary's son would be called 'Son of the Most High' (v.32), son of David (v. 32b), and finally the title by which he would be most widely recognized, 'Son of God' (v. 35)."<sup>182</sup> However, Ringe maintains that "The messenger's reply to Mary's question provides precisely such assurance, and it need not be read as referring to anything but a conception involving human parents."<sup>183</sup> She goes further to say that "nothing in the language of the passage itself requires the interpretation of a 'virginal conception' or a birth any more 'miraculous' than every occasion of new life."<sup>184</sup> Ringe's interpretation concludes with "For Luke to affirm that the child 'will be called Son of God' refers not to biological paternity, but to the acclamation of God's self-evident, indelible commitment and engagement in this human life from its beginning."<sup>185</sup>

In vv. 36 Gabriel changes the subject to Mary's relative Elizabeth. One scholar brings two things to light regarding vv. 36. One, "Luke leaves the nature of their [Mary and Elizabeth] relationship vague" and two, "repetition of the temporal notice, that it was the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, closes this scene with a return to its opening words in v.26."<sup>186</sup> Elizabeth's conception of John the Baptist when she was past childbearing age reveals God's miraculous power and confirms the angelic message to

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<sup>182</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," 51.

<sup>183</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 32.

<sup>184</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 32.

<sup>185</sup> Ringe, "Luke," 32.

<sup>186</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," 52.

Mary.<sup>187</sup> Stein denotes that “God already had done the impossible in Elizabeth’s case so that the problem Mary raised in 1:34 is insignificant.”<sup>188</sup>

Gabriel’s final words (vv. 37) in this text are ‘For nothing will be impossible with God,’ is “a promise in the future tense.”<sup>189</sup> According to Stein, this verse (vv. 37) “refers primarily to Mary’s conceiving as a virgin, but it also alludes to Elizabeth’s conceiving referred to in the previous verse.<sup>190</sup> These words “echo the wonder of Sarah: ‘Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?’ (Gen. 18:14 NRSV) and Jesus’ later declaration, ‘What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.’ (18:27).”<sup>191</sup>

In the final verse of this text (vv. 38) shows Mary’s obedience to the will of God. She is viewed as a “servant of the Lord.” By saying, ‘Let it be done to me according to your word,’ she demonstrates a response to God structurally identical to that of Jesus (see Luke 22:42).<sup>192</sup> Mary’s “yes” was in spite of, what appeared to be, “unfaithfulness on her part [which] was considered adultery [punishable by death, see Deut. 22:23-24; Matt. 1:18-25].”<sup>193</sup> Johnson declares that, “She is a model of the faithful acceptance of God’s will.”<sup>194</sup> After the completion of the annunciation, Gabriel departed.

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<sup>187</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 86.

<sup>188</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 86.

<sup>189</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 52.

<sup>190</sup> Stein, “Luke,” 86.

<sup>191</sup> Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 52.

<sup>192</sup> Johnson, “Luke-Acts,” 228.

<sup>193</sup> J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1993), 49.

<sup>194</sup> Johnson, “Luke-Acts,” 229.

*Synthesis*

This text demonstrates the importance of being obedient to the will of God as seen in the life of Mary. The angel Gabriel brought forth the announcement that Mary had found divine favor with God. She was the chosen vessel to bring forth the Messiah. In light of the fact that Mary was engaged, and still a virgin, it would not seem highly or naturally possible that she could conceive a child. After the announcement by the angel explaining what and how it would take place, plus what had already taken place in the life of Mary's relative, Elizabeth, Mary chose to obey the plan of God. Mary's response was "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Mary chose to obey even when she may not have completely understood. Mary already had plans, to remain a virgin until it was time for her to live as husband and wife with Joseph. However, God intervened in a young virgin girl's life, and she said yes and relinquished her plan to be obedient to the plan of God. This model of ministry set forth is to motivate trained women to embrace their passion but it is also tied to sacrifice in pursuit of the will of God. It calls for obedience to the will of God, in order to serve in unique ways that allow God to work in and through one's life for the advancement of the kingdom.

*Reflection*

In reviewing this text closely, it demonstrates that obedience and submission to God were key responses for the chosen Virgin Mary. Today, in the twenty first century, obedience and submission are still the key responses as it relates to God and much can be learned by Mary's example. The visitation by the angel Gabriel was to announce to Mary, or to inform her of God's plan. To go further, the goal was to invite Mary to join

in God's plan for which she had been chosen for an assignment of this magnitude. In the detailed analysis, it was determined that Mary was at least twelve years of age, lived in area that Bock stated "was not a respected region" and "hardly the expected locale for one sent from God (John 7:41)."<sup>195</sup> She was only described as a virgin named Mary, engaged to Joseph. Nothing in this text would suggest that there was anything special about Mary other than being chosen. The same goes for the trained leaders involved in this model of ministry. God has so chosen leaders based on God's own choosing for ministry assignments within God's will. Like Mary, what God is doing goes beyond the vessel to reach the world.

Another example within this text is that Mary did not consider the earthly consequences of her "yes." Mary was engaged, and still a virgin; she could have been put to death based on Deut. 22:23-24. Her circumstances did not hinder her in saying "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." This is another thing that can be gleaned from Mary that can be demonstrated in this ministry model; the power of a "yes" to God. Although there are trained persons within this context who are invited into the plan of God, it still requires sacrifice with an "unconditional" yes as one is in pursuit of their passion.

The miraculous is taking place within the lives of both Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth appears to have the upper hand because at least she lives with Zachariah as a married couple. Elizabeth is considered "elderly" and barren, but yet the miraculous take place in her life. Elizabeth can always refer to the story of Sarah and Abraham (Gen. 17) who had similar circumstances for encouragement. However, the miraculous, spelled out

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<sup>195</sup> Bock, "Luke," 57.

in this text pertaining to Mary has never been done before. There is no other Christ child; therefore there are no examples to follow for virgin births. This has major significance on this model of ministry. As a result of this model of ministry, there is the anticipation of giving birth to new ministries that have never been done before in this context. This model will also set out to reach outside of the given context to motivate others to pursue their passion. Much like what God was doing in the life of Mary, God is “about to do a new thing” (Isa. 43:19a) through this ministry model.

What God was doing, working God’s plan of salvation, through a young girl named Mary, affected the whole world. This model of ministry, although within the said context, has the potential to reach beyond and motivate other leaders to pursue their passion.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a historical foundation for a model of ministry entitled Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion. This model of ministry will focus on seminary trained, African American females, entering the arena of ministry and vocation. This chapter will examine the lives of five African American women in ministry, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, who pursued their passion in ministry in spite of the obstacles they had to endure. These obstacles included, poverty, limited education, marital issues, lack of family support, racism, sexism, sexuality and psychological issues. However, because of their passion to pursue the things that God had called them to, this motivated them to continue on the journey toward their destiny. One might say that these same obstacles were foundational in catapulting them to the level that allowed these women to tenaciously pursue their passion and achieve their goals.

The lives of these five female historical figures will set the foundation for this model of ministry as it demonstrates motivated women pursuing their passion. This chapter will focus on the lives of the following five women: Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, Julia Foote, Florence Randolph, and Pauli (Anna Pauline) Murray. Various resources will be used to explore each individual's context as it will help give shape to the



understanding of their relentless motivation, in addition to offering structure for this model of ministry proposal.

### **Contextual Community**

These women came through a generation where there were few to no female representation in pursuit of their passion in ministry. It was also during a time where male dominance was prevalent in the home, workplace and the church. In order to understand the measure of their passion, one must first understand the background and the relevance it had on their motivation. In light of same, the background of each woman will be reviewed as a part of this foundational paper.

In Jarena Lee's autobiography she states "I was born February 11th, 1783, at Cape May, State of New Jersey" and "At the age of seven years I was parted from my parents, and went to live as a servant maid, with a Mr. Sharp, at the distance of about sixty miles from the place of my birth."<sup>1</sup> While she lived with the Sharps "she acquired domestic skills and learned to read and write" and "was introduced to religion."<sup>2</sup> As it pertained to religious upbringing, Lee says that "My parents being wholly ignorant of the knowledge of God, had not therefore instructed me in any degree in this great matter."<sup>3</sup> While in the service of the Sharps, she disobeyed the lady of the house and Lee claims "At this awful point, in my early history, the Spirit of God moved in power through my

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<sup>1</sup> Jarena Lee, *The Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, Giving an Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel*, revised and corrected from the original manuscript, written by herself (Philadelphia, PA: Printed and published for the author, 1849), accessed December 31, 2015, <http://www.umilta.net/jarena.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Betsy Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 44.

<sup>3</sup> Lee, *The Religious Experience*, accessed December 31, 2015, <http://www.umilta.net/jarena.html>.

Conscience, and told me I was a wretched sinner.”<sup>4</sup> To put it another way, “Having told a lie to her employer, the young child was consumed by guilt and extreme anxiety, emotions that frequently plagued her as she sought to work out her salvation during her early years.”<sup>5</sup> She lived with the Sharps until “fourteen years” and then “later taken to Philadelphia, where she moved from family to family.”<sup>6</sup> It is recorded that Jarena Lee “was so depressed she twice attempted suicide.”<sup>7</sup> It was “in Philadelphia she felt drawn to the meetings of Richard Allen of the African Methodist Episcopal church.”<sup>8</sup> Jarena wrote in her autobiography that “Three weeks from that day, my soul was gloriously converted to God, under preaching, at the very outset of the sermon.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, Lee joined the AME church. Five years later, in 1809, she felt the call to preach and sought permission to do so from the black Methodist Church in Philadelphia that Allen directed.<sup>10</sup> Jarena Lee was denied a preaching license, because according to Allen, “there is no provision in the Methodist Church Discipline for women’s preaching.”<sup>11</sup> Years later, she accepted Allen’s belated recognition of her as an unordained traveling

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<sup>4</sup> Lee, *The Religious Experience*, accessed December 31, 2015, <http://www.umilta.net/jarena.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Russell-Robinson, “Defiance and Hope: The Christian Temperament in Nineteenth-Century African-American Women’s Narratives,” *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 29, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>6</sup> Martha Simmons and Frank A. Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), 161.

<sup>7</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 161.

<sup>8</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 161.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, *The Religious Experience*, December 31, 2015, <http://www.umilta.net/jarena.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Rosetta R. Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood: Autobiography and Empowerment in Nineteenth-Century American Women* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 108.

exhorter.<sup>12</sup> In regards to Lee's marital status, "In 1811 Jarena Lee became the wife of Joseph Lee, pastor of a black church at Snow Hill, six miles from Philadelphia."<sup>13</sup> Lee was not satisfied with her move to Snow Hill which "left Lee discontented and often lonely; here she was beset with a severe 'general debility' that robbed her of her energy and greatly hampered the efforts at informal evangelism in her home."<sup>14</sup> Another thing that had an effect on Lee's life is that "Within six years further tragedies struck, as death took five members of her family, including her husband" and "Lee was left with two very young children to provide for."<sup>15</sup> Lee then returned to the pursuit of preaching and it was eventually granted by Allen. Lee writes that eight years after her initial request to preach she renewed her request, and Allen, now a bishop, granted her permission to hold prayer meetings and preach in her home, as well as in other homes wherever she was invited.<sup>16</sup> Because of Jarena Lee's persistence and passion, her preaching ministry took off and soared.

Zilpha Elaw was born around 1790 near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup> As for Elaw's family, "Her mother died when she was twelve years old, after giving birth to a twenty-second child; only Zilpha, an older brother, and a younger sister survived childhood."<sup>18</sup> After her mother's death, Elaw was sent to live with Pierson and Rebecca

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<sup>12</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 161.

<sup>13</sup> William L. Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit* (Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 1986), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 161-62.

<sup>17</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 167.

<sup>18</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 167.

Mitchell, a white Quaker family, until age eighteen.<sup>19</sup> Her father died when she was about fourteen.<sup>20</sup> During her years with the Quakers, she attended religious meetings but was little influenced by their teachings. Zilpha was raised with strong religious values much different than that of the Quakers. In her memoirs Zilda wrote:

In my father's house, family devotion was regularly attended to morning and evening; prayer was offered up, and the praises of God were sung; but the persons with whom I now resided were Quakers, and their religious exercises, if they observed any, were performed in the secret silence of the mind; nor were religion and devotion referred to by them in my hearing, which rendered my transition from home the more strange; and, being very young, and no apparent religious restraint being laid upon me, I soon gave way to the evil propensities of an unregenerate heart, which is enmity against God, and heedlessly ran into the ways of sin, taking pleasure in the paths of folly.<sup>21</sup>

However, Zilpha was delivered, "Through prayer and contrition, she grew closer with God."<sup>22</sup>

In 1810, Zilpha married Joseph Elaw, whom she has described as a "very respectable young man," but not a Christian.<sup>23</sup> It was not easy for Zilpha to be married to Joseph for that reason, he was not a Christian and was still worldly. They also had one daughter. According to Elaw, her husband tried persuading her to renounce her religion and to stop attending church.<sup>24</sup> The Elaws moved to Burlington, New Jersey and she "flourished in Burlington and became immersed in her religious experiences."<sup>25</sup> Elaw

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<sup>19</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 167.

<sup>20</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 167.

<sup>21</sup> Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit*, 54.

<sup>22</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 46.

<sup>23</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 46.

<sup>24</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 46.

started attending camp meetings and that is where she submitted to the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel. Having been divinely commissioned to preach, from that day on, Elaw put aside all concerns for her husband, daughter, family, and friends, and immersed herself in her mission, preaching wherever she could, fully empowered by the Holy Ghost.<sup>26</sup> After her husband's death on "January 27, 1823," Elaw decided to "return to Philadelphia to preach."<sup>27</sup> Elaw was connected to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In Julia Foote's autobiography she writes, "I was born in 1828, in Schenectady, N.Y... my mother's fourth child."<sup>28</sup> She goes further to say that her "father was born free, but was stolen, when a child, and enslaved" and that her "mother was born a slave, in the State of New York."<sup>29</sup> Both parents suffered hard times during slavery, but when feasible, Foote writes that her "father bought himself, and then his wife and their first child, at that time an infant."<sup>30</sup> From 1833 to 1836, she lived with a prominent white family who enrolled her in an integrated country school, where she received a rudimentary education.<sup>31</sup> Foote's "teenage years were devoted to the care of her younger siblings, she read considerably, especially in the Bible, and attended many church

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<sup>26</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 47.

<sup>27</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 167.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Foote, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire* (Cleveland, OH: Printed for the author by Lauer and Yost, 1886), 9, accessed January 10, 2016, <http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/digs/wwm978/>.

<sup>29</sup> Foote, *A Brand Plucked*, accessed January 10, 2016, <http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/digs/wwm978/>.

<sup>30</sup> Foote, *A Brand Plucked*, accessed January 10, 2016, <http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/digs/wwm978/>.

<sup>31</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 57.

meetings.”<sup>32</sup> Also during her teenage years, at age “fifteen, she had a profound conversion experience and joined an African Methodist Episcopal church in Albany, New York” and at age sixteen “she married George Foote, a sailor, and moved with him to Boston.”<sup>33</sup> The AME church was pastored by “Reverend Jehiel C. Beman, a leading antislavery orator and president of the Massachusetts Temperance Society of Colored People.”<sup>34</sup> Foote’s conversion experience occurred at age fifteen, but “it was in Boston that she was moved to exhort and pray publicly, and she became committed to preaching the gospel.”<sup>35</sup> Foote experienced much opposition to preaching from Reverend Beman, Joseph, her husband and her family but remained true to the call that was on her life.

Florence Spearing Randolph was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on August 9, 1866, to John and Anna Smith Spearing.<sup>36</sup> Florence’s mother died when Florence was very young, leaving her father, a cabinetmaker and painter, with four children to rear.<sup>37</sup> Florence, the youngest child, attended local public schools and graduated from the Avery Normal Institute.<sup>38</sup> Randolph took up dressing making as a trade and “In 1885 on a trip to Jersey City to visit her older sisters, Florence saw that her dressmaking skills were in demand and at a higher price” which resulted in her decision “to move north to Jersey

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<sup>32</sup> William Andrews, *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>33</sup> Andrews, *The Heath Anthology*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>34</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 57.

<sup>35</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 57.

<sup>36</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

<sup>37</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

<sup>38</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

City.”<sup>39</sup> The following year she married Hugh Randolph, a cook in the dining car service of Pullman Company.<sup>40</sup> Randolph “set up her own dressmaking business in their Jersey City home.”<sup>41</sup> It was noted that their “marriage was very successful, lasting until his death in 1913.”<sup>42</sup> From this marriage they had one daughter.

In 1886, Florence Spearing Randolph became a member of the Monmouth Street AME Zion Church, where she was appointed Sunday School teacher and class leader for young people.<sup>43</sup> As a child in Charleston, South Carolina, she had attended the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church, where she was converted at the age of thirteen.<sup>44</sup> Moving forward, “Florence began studying the Bible under the tutelage of the Rev. E. George Biddle, an AME Zion minister and Yale graduate.”<sup>45</sup> Throughout the late 1880s and early 1890s, she was an active temperance and church worker but professed distaste at the idea of being a woman preacher.<sup>46</sup> However, a call to preach came in “1898,” and “convinced that God had called her to preach, Florence joined the New Jersey

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<sup>39</sup> Robert A. Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph: Pastor of Wallace Chapel Helped Spearhead Women’s Suffrage,” *The Summit Historical Society*, accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>40</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>41</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>42</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

<sup>43</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 103.

<sup>44</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 103.

<sup>45</sup> Betty Robison, “Florence Spearing Randolph: Holiness Preacher and Social Reformer,” *Charisma Magazine*, accessed January 11, 2016, <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph>.

<sup>46</sup> Robison, “Florence Spearing Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph>.

Conference of the AME Zion Church.”<sup>47</sup> Randolph received “early theological training from Rev. Biddle, who provided her first teacher’s Bible, and allowed her to use his extensive library.”<sup>48</sup> Much like, Lee, Elaw and Foote, Randolph faced opposition but proceeded with moving forward doing what she was called to do.

Pauli Murray was born on November 20, 1910, as Anna Pauline Murray, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was the fourth of six children of William Henry Murray and Agnes Georgianna Fitzgerald Murray.<sup>49</sup> Murray’s parents were considered “a middle class couple of mixed ethnic heritage, including African, European, and Native American ancestries.”<sup>50</sup> As middle class family, “Murray’s father was a public school teacher and principal; her mother was a nurse, a graduate of Hampton Institute.”<sup>51</sup> Murray experienced tragedy at an early age beginning “In 1914, when Murray was three years old, her mother died of a brain hemorrhage” and again when “her father was later murdered, in 1923, by a guard at Crownwell State Hospital where he had been committed.”<sup>52</sup> Following the death of Murray’s mother, “her father was unable to take care of his children due to mental illness resulting from typhoid fever, Murray was adopted by her mother’s older sister, Pauline Fitzgerald Dame, who brought her to Durham, North Carolina, to live.”<sup>53</sup> In Murray’s autobiography she states “All of this left

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<sup>47</sup> Robison, “Florence Spearing Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph>.

<sup>48</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 103.

<sup>49</sup> Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood*, 171.

<sup>50</sup> Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood*, 171.

<sup>51</sup> Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood*, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood*, 171.

<sup>53</sup> Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood*, 171-72.



me with a deep, unspoken grief over the loss of my parents and the unhappy circumstances which cut short the lives that had held such great promise.”<sup>54</sup> In light of issues of injustice with her father and others, this fueled Murray’s passion in various areas of her life. Things that were foundational in the works and life of Murray were education and her religion. Murray’s life was dominated by two concerns: education and participation in religious community.<sup>55</sup> It was noted that “School and church were extensions of her home life, and this connection to the quest for both intellectual and spiritual development had a profound impact on Murray’s later life.”<sup>56</sup> Addressing her education, “After completing Hillside High School and one year at Richmond Hill High School in New York City, Murray enrolled in Hunter College and, after several difficulties, graduated in 1933.”<sup>57</sup> After graduating Murray “worked through the Depression writing for the Works Progress Administration and serving various political, labor and civil rights organizations in New York.”<sup>58</sup> In pursuing her education further, Murray “attempted to study law at the University of North Carolina, but was denied entrance because of her race.”<sup>59</sup> She went on to graduate at the head of her class from

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<sup>54</sup> Pauli Murray, *Pauli Murray: The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest and Poet* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 13.

<sup>55</sup> Anthony Pinn, *Becoming “America’s Problem Child:” An Outline of Pauli Murray’s Religious Life and Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 12.

<sup>56</sup> Pinn, *Becoming “America’s Problem Child,”* 12.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Pinn, *Moral Evil and Redemptive Suffering* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002), 215.

<sup>58</sup> Nancy S. Montgomery, “Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage,” *The Christian Century* 104, no. 27 (September 30, 1987): 828, accessed January 11, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>59</sup> Montgomery, “Song in a Weary Throat,” 828.

Howard University Law School, the only woman in that class.<sup>60</sup> What helped spur Murray's decision to pursue a law degree was "because of [the] racism encounter on a trip through the South and a short time spent in jail because of refusal to abide by Jim Crow regulations, Murray decided to attend law school in order to work toward the eradication of racial discrimination."<sup>61</sup> Murray also received the LL.M. degree in 1945 from the University of California at Berkley.<sup>62</sup> Other accomplishments included,

From 1946 to 1977, Murray held a variety of prestigious positions... the first African American deputy attorney general of California, acknowledgement as the first African American to earn the doctorate of juridical science degree from Yale Law School, the only African American (and initially one of three women) associate at the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, and Garrison.<sup>63</sup>

After a distinguished career as a lawyer, educator, and activist, on January 8, 1977, at the age of sixty-seven, Pauli Murray was ordained an Episcopal priest at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.<sup>64</sup> This would make Murray "the first black female, and the second African American, to be ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church."<sup>65</sup>

The context of each woman has been described because it played a major part in motivating them in pursuit of their passion. Their lives are an example of what happens when passion is pursued; regardless of their circumstance, greatness can still be obtained.

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<sup>60</sup> Montgomery, "Song in a Weary Throat," 828.

<sup>61</sup> Pinn, *Moral Evil and Redemptive Suffering*, 215.

<sup>62</sup> Anthony Pinn, *Pauli Murray: Selected Sermons and Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), xxiv.

<sup>63</sup> Pinn, *Pauli Murray: Selected Sermons and Writings*, xxiv.

<sup>64</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 223.

<sup>65</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 223.

Even though the motivating factors may be somewhat different or at different degrees than in this model of ministry, it is still very beneficial and relevant.

### **Passion and Motivation**

The context of each of the five women has been reviewed and now their successes and accomplishments, fueled by their passion, will be discussed. Though each of the women's lives may have been different, there were commonalities when it came to their persistence in doing what they were called to do and what they were passionate about.

Jarena Lee is considered "One of the first American women known to have preached the gospel in the thirteen colonies."<sup>66</sup> Although she was never ordained, she is now highly regarded as not only a pioneer and trailblazer for women in ministry but also a preacher of uncommon courage.<sup>67</sup> In one year she traveled 2,325 miles, mostly on foot, and preached 178 sermons.<sup>68</sup> Of course, this did not happen without struggles. Prior to being granted permission to preach, Lee suffered and endured many obstacles, both internal and external from: being separated from her parents at an early age, to suicide attempts and thoughts, racism, and sexism. Even after she was granted permission to preach, there were still some of the same struggles and obstacles. In her travels Lee was gone for extended periods of time. Lee had to create "a system of networking that allowed her the flexibility to travel" which would involve the help of "parents, friends,

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<sup>66</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 160.

<sup>67</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 160.

<sup>68</sup> Susan Hubert, "Testimony and Prophecy in the Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 54-55, no. 1-2 (Spring-Fall 1998): 49, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

and church members to keep her child while she traveled.”<sup>69</sup> In Lee’s autobiography she mentions being sick that sometimes prohibited her from traveling and that “...wandering through this world so wide; having to travel among strangers, and being poor and destitute; I was sorely tempted. My money was gone, my health was gone, and I measurably without a home. But I rested on the promises of God.”<sup>70</sup> One could ascertain that Lee did not allow anything to keep her from pursuing her passion, or what she was called to do. One scholar describes Lee this way, “She models courage, commitment, and dedication in ministry without official recognition, title or ordained status.”<sup>71</sup>

Zilpha Elaw is described as “an evangelist and a missionary who was a contemporary of Jarena Lee.”<sup>72</sup> In looking back over her life, she too had to deal with obstacles and struggles. Elaw lost both of her parents at an early age. She married a worldly man who was a hindrance to her ministry, and even tried to convince her and stop her pursuit of ministry. She finally received the approval to preach by the church. Once the approval was “received to preach by the “Methodist Church elders...she was still ostracized in her church community for stepping into what was thought of as a man’s role.”<sup>73</sup> As previously stated, “...Elaw put aside all concerns for her husband, daughter, family, and friends, and immersed herself in her mission, preaching wherever she could,

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<sup>69</sup> Chanta M. Haywood, *Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers and the Word, 1823-1913* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 62.

<sup>70</sup> Lee, *The Religious Experience*, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 32.

<sup>72</sup> McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle*, 34.

<sup>73</sup> Simmons and Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, 166.

fully empowered by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>74</sup> Following the death of her husband, she continued the pursuit of her calling and “opened a school for Black youth; and she carried her message into slaveholding territory, which included Maryland and Virginia.”<sup>75</sup> One scholar notes that Elaw “traveled extensively... demonstrated exceptional courage,” based on the fact that “she traveled to slave states in the late 1820’s, risking arrest, kidnapping, or sale into bondage.”<sup>76</sup> Elaw also preached outside of the United States, as did other African American female preachers. As itinerant preachers, Zilpha and Elizabeth crossed U.S. borders; Elizabeth preached in Canada, and Zilpha in England.<sup>77</sup> It is noted that “As ‘colored’ females, they faced opposition based on their gender and race” but continued to “preached anyhow and anywhere discursively constructing identities and vocational legitimacy for themselves.”<sup>78</sup> Elaw “remained in England for six years, publishing memoirs in London, in 1846” but “nothing is known of Elaw after this publication.”<sup>79</sup>

Julia Foote was considered “a role model for black women aspiring to be ministers and one of the most forceful advocates for participatory equality and ordination of women in the Church.”<sup>80</sup> Foote knew that a woman who claimed a divine calling to

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<sup>74</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 47.

<sup>75</sup> Robinson, “Defiance and Hope,” 29-30.

<sup>76</sup> McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle*, 34.

<sup>77</sup> Mitzi J. Smith, “‘Unbossed and Unbought’: Zilpha Elaw and Old Elizabeth and a Political Discourse of Origins,” *Black Theology* 9, no. 3 (November 2011): 288, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, “‘Unbossed and Unbought,’” 288.

<sup>79</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 47.

<sup>80</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 59.

the ministry challenged Christian tradition and American social prejudice.<sup>81</sup> Women were not expected to assume public leadership positions, nor were they allowed to speak, except under restrictions, in most Christian churches.<sup>82</sup> Foote faced opposition from her husband and from her pastor, but she continued to the course. When the minister of her church in Boston refused her access to his pulpit and threatened to expel her from the congregation, she refused to be daunted.<sup>83</sup> She took her case to higher denominational authorities, and when she received no support from them, she set out on an independent preaching career.<sup>84</sup> At the same time as black ministers “sneered” at her for presuming to have been called, whites questioned whether a black person, especially a black woman could ever speak for God.<sup>85</sup> Foote responded by saying that “she conceded that she seemed like an unlikely candidate for the ministry, especially since she ‘had always been opposed to the preaching of women,’ but the decision has not been her own.”<sup>86</sup> Foote even faced opposition from her mother. In her autobiography regarding her mother it reads:

I went home to my father's house in Binghamton, N.Y. They were filled with joy to have me with them once more, after an absence of six years. As my mother embraced me, she exclaimed: "So you are a preacher, are you?" I replied: "So they say." "Well, Julia," said she, "when I first heard that you were a preacher, I

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<sup>81</sup> Andrews, *The Heath Anthology*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>82</sup> Andrews, *The Heath Anthology*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>83</sup> Andrews, *The Heath Anthology*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>84</sup> Andrews, *The Heath Anthology*, accessed December 31, 2015, [http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author\\_pages/late\\_nineteenth/foote\\_ju.html](http://college.cengage.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/foote_ju.html).

<sup>85</sup> Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 183.

<sup>86</sup> Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 183.

said that I would rather hear you were dead." These words, coming so unexpectedly from my mother, filled me with anguish. Was I to meet opposition here, too? But my mother, with streaming eyes, continued: "My dear daughter, it is all past now. I have heard from those who have attend your meetings what the Lord has done for you, and I am satisfied."<sup>87</sup>

Foote continued on, determined to stay the course. For more than fifty years, she served as an itinerant evangelist and a Methodist holiness preacher, traveling and lecturing widely at camp meeting, revivals, and churches in California, the Midwest, the Northeast and Canada.<sup>88</sup> In 1894 Bishop James Walker Hood ordained Julia A. Foote deacon.<sup>89</sup> Mary Small was "ordained 'elder' in 1898 with Foote following in 1900."<sup>90</sup> From 1884 until her death in 1901, she resided with Bishop Alexander Walters and his family.<sup>91</sup> She also "assisted Walters during his ministry at the Stockton Street AME Zion Church in San Francisco (1883-1886)."<sup>92</sup>

Florence Spearing Randolph was among a small group of women evangelists who were licensed to preach and ordained as deacons and elders in the late nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> Randolph was distinguished from most women preachers in that she received appointments to pastor a number of churches.<sup>94</sup> Prior to her call to preach, "she became a

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<sup>87</sup> Julia A. Foote, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch* (Charleston, SC: Bibliolife, 2009), 84-85.

<sup>88</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 59.

<sup>89</sup> Cleophus J. LaRue, *This is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>90</sup> LaRue, *This Is My Story*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 59.

<sup>92</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 59.

<sup>93</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

<sup>94</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 101.

Bible student and took regular Bible lessons in order to speak in rescue missions and Christian Endeavor meetings, not to preach.”<sup>95</sup> As previously stated and cited, Randolph was under the tutelage of Rev. George Biddle, an AME Zion minister and Yale graduate. After acknowledging her call to preach, Randolph received opposition from her husband, family, friends and ministers. Strengthened by reading about Abraham’s willingness to offer up love, after a night of struggle in prayer she “gave up husband, home and baby and all determined to go out homeless and [penniless] along with Christ.”<sup>96</sup> In 1900 she was ordained a deacon and three years later an elder.<sup>97</sup> By 1925 the relationship between Randolph and the church to which she was most often associated began when she was appointed "temporary" pastor of the small (thirty-five members) mission church in Summit, N.J. known as Wallace Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. It met at the local YMCA.<sup>98</sup> In 1933 Randolph was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Livingstone College in North Carolina.<sup>99</sup> She was the first woman to receive such an honor from the college.<sup>100</sup> After twenty-one years as pastor of Wallace Chapel,

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<sup>95</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 104.

<sup>96</sup> Florence Spearing Randolph, “Florence Randolph Life and Work in Part,” and “School Days,” handwritten transcripts, Randolph Collection, quoted in Betsy Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 101.

<sup>97</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>98</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>99</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>100</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).



Reverend Randolph retired from active ministry in 1946.<sup>101</sup> She continued as pastor emeritus until her death in 1951.<sup>102</sup>

One scholar notes that “In the sermons of Reverend Florence Spearing Randolph, there is evidence not only of a particular theological stance, but also there is a particular emphasis on community building and justice making as it relates to the transformation of black women.”<sup>103</sup> Through both the form and content of these sermons, Randolph makes definitive statements about not only the images of black women but also the roles and responsibilities of black women and the black community at large.<sup>104</sup> As a result of Randolph’s persistence, she went on to become “A renowned minister, missionary, suffragist, lecturer, organizer and temperance worker.”<sup>105</sup> Another thing that Randolph is known for is that she “founded the state federation to coordinate the work of various African American women’s clubs around the state.”<sup>106</sup> Generally barred from membership in the white women’s clubs of New Jersey, black women joined forces in

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<sup>101</sup> Hageman, “The Rev. Florence Randolph,” accessed January 11, 2016, [http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian\\_Florence%20Randolph.php](http://www.summitnjhistory.org/Historian_Florence%20Randolph.php).

<sup>102</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 105.

<sup>103</sup> Alison P. Gise Johnson, “Retexturization of a Tradition: A Womanist Hermeneutical Complex for Understanding the Religio-Historical Value of the African American Sermonic Genre,” in *Born to Preach: Essays in Honor of the Ministry of Henry and Ella Mitchell*, ed. Samuel K. Roberts (Valley Forge PA: Judson Press, 2000), 122.

<sup>104</sup> Johnson, “Retexturization of a Tradition,” 122.

<sup>105</sup> Robison, “Florence Spearing Randolph,” accessed January 10, 2016, <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-speaking-randolph>.

<sup>106</sup> Women’s Project of New Jersey, “The Colored Women’s Clubs and World War I, 1918,” accessed January 10, 2016, [http://njwomenshistory.org/Period\\_4/WomensClub.htm](http://njwomenshistory.org/Period_4/WomensClub.htm).

their own organization to improve social, educational, and working conditions in their communities.<sup>107</sup>

Over the life of Pauli Murray, there were various encounters and experiences that appeared to have an effect on her life choices, calling and character. Murray was from a middle class, religious family which made her the recipient of privileges not afforded by some of the other pioneers previously discussed. However, Murray still had struggles but many accomplishments. Some of the accomplishments were fueled by her passion to fight injustice. One was the death of her father while he was in an asylum. Another situation that fueled her passion to fight injustice was “In 1940 Murray became directly involved in nonviolent resistance of segregation, well before the memorable action of Rosa Parks.”<sup>108</sup> As a result of this incident, Murray went to jail. The next year Pauli Murray entered Howard University in Washington, DC, with the single-minded intention of becoming a civil rights lawyer and destroying Jim Crow.<sup>109</sup> She organized lunch counter sit-in demonstrations by black students in the District of Columbia while she was at Howard Law School in the 1940s.<sup>110</sup> In 1944, in graduate school, she wrote a paper challenging the "separate but equal" formula. She discovered much later that this paper was used by the NAACP lawyers preparing their arguments for the successful 1954

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<sup>107</sup> Women's Project of New Jersey, "The Colored Women's Clubs and World War I, 1918," accessed January 10, 2016, [http://njwomenshistory.org/Period\\_4/WomensClub.htm](http://njwomenshistory.org/Period_4/WomensClub.htm).

<sup>108</sup> Anne West Ramirez, "To Her That Overcame: A Tribute to Pauli Murray," *Daughters of Sarah* 17, no. 5 (October 1991): 26, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>109</sup> Ramirez, "To Her That Overcame," 26.

<sup>110</sup> Suzanne Radley Hiatt, "Pauli Murray: May Her Song Be Heard at Last," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 70, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

Supreme Court challenge, *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>111</sup> As a lawyer she worked ceaselessly on civil rights cases, beginning with that of Odel Walker, a black sharecropper convicted by an all-white jury of killing a white man and subsequently executed in Virginia in 1942.<sup>112</sup> Throughout her career as a lawyer she experienced racism and sexism (and often unemployment) by the double burden of being female and black.<sup>113</sup> Throughout Murray's life, she fought for liberation, both racism and sexism. According to Murray, "Theologies of liberation are specific; they are usually written out of the concrete situations and experiences of particular groups."<sup>114</sup> Black theology focuses upon the black experience under white racism; feminist theology is concerned with the revolt of women against male-chauvinist structures of society; Third World theologies develop out of the struggle for national liberation.<sup>115</sup> Their common purpose is to commit Christians to radical political and social change, and to transform society in order to create a new and more humane world.<sup>116</sup>

Murray also received a "doctorate in juridical law from Yale Law School (1965)."<sup>117</sup> She taught at Brandeis University as a visiting professor of American

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<sup>111</sup> Hiatt, "Pauli Murray," 70.

<sup>112</sup> Hiatt, "Pauli Murray," 70.

<sup>113</sup> Hiatt, "Pauli Murray," 70.

<sup>114</sup> Pauli Murray, "Black Theology and Feminist Theology: A Comparative View," *Anglican Theological Review* 60, no. 1 (January 1978): 4, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>115</sup> Murray, "Black Theology and Feminist Theology," 4.

<sup>116</sup> Murray, "Black Theology and Feminist Theology," 4.

<sup>117</sup> Christiana Z. Peppard, "Poetry, Ethics, and the Legacy of Pauli Murray," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 30, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2010): 23, accessed December 31, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

civilization, in Accra as a visiting lecturer at the Ghana School of Law, and at Benedict College in South Carolina.<sup>118</sup> Following the death of a friend, Murray felt a call into ministry. Murray had always maintained her ties with the Episcopal Church, and in 1977 she was ordained as one of the first women priests in the denomination.<sup>119</sup>

### **Conclusion**

There are differences among these five women. However, what these women have in common is a motivation to passionately pursue their dreams and goals to make a difference on behalf of others. Things such as sanctification, holiness, social change, civil rights, the right to partake in the life of the church, the right to come to the communion table, just to name a few. These were not issues that just pertained to themselves, but for all who were oppressed. Their life work and commitment was for the greater good.

When looking at the many struggles such as poverty, limited education, the dangers of traveling, being away from home for long periods of time, leaving their children in the care of parents, church family and friends, husband issues, and psychological issues, these women would have to be passionate about their called assignments. It was not necessarily about a call to preach, but motivation, in the midst of all of the opposition, to persevere and to pursue what they were passionate about. Some of the pain and opposition that they encountered were right in their own families,

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<sup>118</sup> Peppard, "Poetry, Ethics, and the Legacy of Pauli Murray," 23.

<sup>119</sup> Montgomery, "Song in a Weary Throat," 828.

including their church family. They had the determination to fight when there was no one in their corner and they prevailed.

Their passion was the motivation that set the standard high for generations to come to pursue their passion. These historical figures are examples of what it means to be motivated to pursue and embrace your passion, and it has major significance on this model of ministry. This ministry project “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion” will continue the marvelous works of these women and will be a change agent, which will impact the lives of others for generations to come.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Womanist theology serves as the appropriate foundation for this model of ministry, with the goal of motivating trained women to embrace their passion, because of its focus on empowering the African American woman. From slavery, down through the years to the twenty first century, the African American woman has dealt with issues of slavery, oppression, poverty, classism, racism, and sexism, all of which have attempted to take away the woman's power, vision and voice. The absence of these things results in little to no chance of empowerment. The Bible declares, "where there is no vision, the people perish," (Prov. 29:18).

Womanist theologians have gone back as far as slavery acknowledging the great liberating work of Harriet Tubman, who in the midst of oppression, still made liberation happen. Although slavery has long ended, there are still residuals that have an effect on the African American community. Womanist theology shows various ways women have fought and actions taken for empowerment and liberation through education, advocacy, and mentorship. By the empowerment of African American women, it has brought clarity to purpose and vision. It has also created a desire and drive to passionately pursue that which one has been called to do, and to bring forth the voice that will continue to echo for generations. This voice will empower, educate, liberate, encourage and be an example to others as they continue on their journey.

Liberation theologies have developed from the particular perspectives of people who were viewed as outsiders to the closed circle of Western thought.<sup>1</sup> Womanist theology is one form of liberation theologies.<sup>2</sup> Although womanist theology is considered a form of liberation theology, it is distinct from feminist and black theologies. There are some commonalities but these theologies fail to address issues and concerns relating specifically to the African American woman such as sexism, classism and racism. Because of the existence of these oppressive factors, liberating possibilities are hindered for the African American woman. Womanist theology is interested in the development of the whole woman with an understanding that this development will benefit the community as a whole.

One scholar asserts that,

Womanist theology is also concerned about violence in the Black community, the high levels of drug addiction and crime, homelessness, unemployment, gang activity, teen pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, poor education and miseducation of Black children, and all forms of oppression.<sup>3</sup>

Smith further states that,

African American women embrace a theology not only grounded in a liberative praxis, but also cognizant of the social, political, and economic challenges that confront the African American community and especially Black women.<sup>4</sup>

Although this model of ministry directly relates to the empowerment of the African American woman, the end result reaches to the community at large. In essence, this

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 38.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Yolanda Y. Smith, "Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education," *Black Theology* 6, no. 2 (May 2008): 200-220, accessed May 29, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, "Womanist Theology," 200-220.

model of ministry is to empower to empower, making womanist theology an excellent foundation because of its procreative nature.

The womanist theology definition, origin, and features are brought to light by various womanist theologians to help bring understanding to this theology. The word “womanist” has its origin from the word “womanish,” a term coined by Alice Walker.

The following is a definition of womanist based on this term:

Womanist: 1. From womanish. (Opp. of “girlish,” i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black expression of mothers to female children, “You acting womanish,” i.e. like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered “good” for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: “You trying to be grown.” Responsible. In charge. Serious.<sup>5</sup>

Although the term bears no explicitly theological or Christian meaning apart from “lov[ing] the Spirit,” it aptly describes reality of African American women.<sup>6</sup> Another scholar goes further to add some insight to womanist theology by stating, “Today a theological corrective is developing that has considerable potential for bringing black women’s experience into theology so that black women will see the need to transform the sexist character of the churches and their theology.”<sup>7</sup> Williams declares that, “The corrective—emerging among black female theologians, ethicists, biblical scholars, ministers and laywomen—is called womanist theology.”<sup>8</sup> She explains that, “womanist

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<sup>5</sup> Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1983), xi.

<sup>6</sup> Raquel St. Clair, “Womanist Biblical Interpretation,” in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian Blount (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 55.

<sup>7</sup> Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), xvii.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, xvii.



theology is a prophetic voice reminding African-American denominational churches of their mission to seek justice and voice for all people.... Yet this prophetic voice is concerned about the well-being of the entire African American community.”<sup>9</sup> Some of the defining features of womanist theology are as follows:

Womanist theology attempts to help black women seek, affirm and have confidence in the importance of their experience and faith for determining the character of the Christian religion in the African-American community. Womanist theology challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women’s struggle for survival and for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women’s and the family’s freedom and well-being. Womanist theology opposes all oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physical disability and caste.... Womanist theology...also branches off in its own direction, introducing new issues and constructing new analytical categories needed to interpret simultaneously black women’s and the black community’s experience in the context of theology.<sup>10</sup>

As previously stated there are other theologies that share some of the same features as womanist theology, such as black theology and feminist theology. Although womanist theology has drawn insights from both feminist theology and black theology, neither one of these perspectives has been able to fully address the concerns of African American women.<sup>11</sup> Womanist theology is distinct in that it is specifically geared toward the African American woman but still involved in other dialogues. Womanists engage in a plurality of dialogues, with black male liberation theologians and with feminists who work in Asian, Hispanic, and Euroamerican contexts, without diminishing the primacy of their own concerns as black women.<sup>12</sup> Other theologies tend to be limited when it comes

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<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, xvii.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, "Womanist Theology," 200-220.

<sup>12</sup> Rosemary Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 230.

to addressing important issues and concerns relevant to the African American woman.

Rosemary Ruether holds that “Womanism can be critical of the myopias of black males and also of feminists, not simply in order to confront others, but for the sake of a greater solidarity in struggle for justice.”<sup>13</sup> Feminist theology is often coupled with womanist theology because both theologies relate specifically to the woman. However, it is stated that “often unmentioned is that feminist theologians’ sources for women’s experience refer almost exclusively to White women’s experience.”<sup>14</sup> Womanist maintain that “Slavery and segregation have created such a gulf between these women that White feminists’ common assumption that all women are in the same situation with respect to sexism is difficult to understand when history so clearly tells us a different story.”<sup>15</sup> This shows the distance between the two theologies with feminist lacking the voice to speak for all women. There was no voice during slavery and when slavery ended, according to Jacqueline Grant, “for many black people, emancipation meant slavery without chains.”<sup>16</sup> This would also indicate, there was still no voice following slavery. However, there may not have been an open voice or declaration, but there were actions that gave voice by liberating and empowering the people. This is important to this model of ministry because it shows that empowerment can take place in various ways and it can be very effective. This model has different areas of focus that makes it rich and transformative in diverse ways.

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<sup>13</sup> Ruether, *Women and Redemption*, 230.

<sup>14</sup> Jacqueline Grant, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 195.

<sup>15</sup> Grant, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus*, 195-196.

<sup>16</sup> Grant, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus*, 197.

In looking closely at womanist theology, it is apparent that empowerment comes in many forms. Womanist scholars often refer to women such as “Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, Anna Jones Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and countless other women who have molded and shaped the womanist consciousness that now pervades twenty-first century North America.”<sup>17</sup> Carpenter states that, “This consciousness has resulted in a social and political praxis that is characterized by struggle, survival, self-determination, and freedom for others and themselves.”<sup>18</sup>

The womanist theologian must search for the voices, actions, opinions, experience, and faith of women whose names sometimes slip into the male-centered rendering of black history, but whose actual stories remain remote.<sup>19</sup> During slavery, “Harriet Tubman defied the law in order physically and spiritually to nurture hundreds of black people from bondage in the South to freedom in the North.”<sup>20</sup> Harriet Tubman moved slaves from being powerless in bondage to a place of freedom where opportunity is possible and available. According to womanist theologian and Old Testament scholar, Renita Weems, “Forbidding slaves from reading was, undoubtedly, intended to restrict

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<sup>17</sup> Delores C. Carpenter, *A Time for Honor: A Portrait of African American Clergywomen* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 102.

<sup>18</sup> Carpenter, *A Time for Honor*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> Delores S. Williams, “Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices,” *Christianity and Crisis* 47, no. 3 (March 2, 1987): 67, accessed February 28, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 52.

the slave's contact with the outside world and to insure that slaves were totally dependent upon their slavemasters to interpret and manage their environment for them."<sup>21</sup>

Milla Granson was a slave who liberated and empowered other slaves through education. She was taught to read by one of her slave owner's children. In light of Granson being educated, she later "connected with other slaves, taught them to read and thereby effected their educational liberation."<sup>22</sup> As a result, "they learned to read, many of these slaves forged passes and escaped into Canada."<sup>23</sup> Mammy Pleasant was another liberator who "was advisor to wealthy white men in California, increased her fortune considerably and used much of her money to secure the political and educational liberation of black people."<sup>24</sup> Each woman used different means to empower others. It was not geared specifically toward African American women, but this liberation and empowerment benefited the African American race.

This act of liberation definitely speaks to this model of ministry because empowerment through the group extends to empowerment in the community. The coming together of African American women with commonalities such as ministry, education and in pursuit of the next phase of the journey provides a sacred and empowering space. However, it does not rest within this group only but acts as the foundation that extends to serve and empower others which can be witnessed through the lives and work of women such as Tubman, Granson and Pleasant. Jacqueline Grant

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<sup>21</sup> Renita Weems, "Reading Her Way through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 60.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 210.

<sup>23</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 210-211.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 211.

claims that a womanist is “one who has developed survival strategies in spite of the oppression of her race and sex in order to save her family and her people.”<sup>25</sup> Tubman, Granson and Pleasant, as well as others, would definitely fall within the womanist category because of their unwavering work to empower through liberation and education.

African American women may have benefited from other liberation theologies, but “African American women had to deny a part of themselves to participate in them.”<sup>26</sup> Another scholar adds that, “The civil rights movement sought to liberate African Americans from racial oppression experienced in a racist society...emphasis on race, gender issues were ignored.”<sup>27</sup> This placed African American women in a “precarious situation” in that they “needed to maintain a partnership with black men in the struggle against white racism...[and] also realized...black men did not respect them as equals.”<sup>28</sup> Theologians also “argued for the unmuting of Black women’s voice and telling of their own stories so that everybody would know their precise status as told by them, and not by Black men or well meaning Whites.”<sup>29</sup>

James Cone, leader of the black theology movement came to the realization that there was a sexism issue in the black community. He contends that, “While white women forced me to consider the problem of sexism in a white context, black women

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<sup>25</sup> Grant, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus*, 205.

<sup>26</sup> St. Clair, “Womanist Biblical Interpretation,” 56.

<sup>27</sup> St. Clair, “Womanist Biblical Interpretation,” 56.

<sup>28</sup> Kelly Delaine Brown, “God is as Christ Does: Toward a Womanist Theology,” *The Journal of Religious Thought* 46, no. 1 (September 1989): 7-16, accessed May 27, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>29</sup> Rufus Burrow, “Enter Womanist Theology and Ethics,” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 19, accessed March 18, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

forced me to face the reality of sexism in the black community.”<sup>30</sup> Cone stated further that, “As I listened to black women articulate their pain, and as I observed the insensitive responses of black men, it became existentially clear to me that sexism was a black problem too.”<sup>31</sup> Another male scholar declares:

Sexism against black women should also be addressed by black theology and the black church. Women in black churches outnumber men by more than two to one; yet in positions of authority and responsibility the ratio is reversed. Though women are gradually entering ministry as bishops, pastors, deacons and elders, many men and women still resist and fear that development.<sup>32</sup>

Based on the concerns of womanist theologians, and the support and acknowledgements by African American Christian men, it becomes clear that empowerment cannot take place with the muting of the voice due to sexism. One of the benefits of this project, with roots in womanist theology, is the freedom to find and empower the voice that will be a change agent in the community and the world by empowering others. It is like the voice of the prophet Isaiah who declared, “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.” (Isa. 61:1). When the release takes place, it empowers and helps to unmute the African American female voice. Katie Cannon maintains that “Understanding the prophetic tradition of the Bible empowers Black women to fashion a set of values on their own terms, as well as mastering, radicalizing, and sometimes destroying the

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<sup>30</sup> James Cone, *My Soul Looks Back* (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1982), 117.

<sup>31</sup> Cone, *My Soul Looks Back*, 118.

<sup>32</sup> James Henry Harris, "Practicing Liberation in the Black Church," *The Christian Century* 107, no. 19 (June 13, 1990): 599-602, accessed May 29, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

pervasive negative orientations imposed by the larger society.”<sup>33</sup> She also claims that, “Black women serve as contemporary prophets, calling other women forth so that they can break away from ideologies and belief systems that presume to define their reality.”<sup>34</sup>

Womanist theologians often refer to biblical characters that have similar struggles to the African American woman such as Hagar (Genesis 16). Hagar had no voice and the decisions regarding her life rested with Sarai and Abram. Delores Williams stated that:

I slowly realized there were striking similarities between Hager’s story and the story of African American women. Similarities include “Hagar’s heritage was African as was black women’s. Hagar was a slave. Black American women had emerged from a slave heritage and still lived in light of it. Hagar was brutalized by her slave owner, the Hebrew woman Sarah...Hager had no control over her body. It belonged to her slaver owner...”<sup>35</sup>

Williams also stated that, “Even today, most of Hagar’s situation is congruent with many African American women’s predicaments of poverty, sexual and economic exploitation, surrogacy, domestic violence, homelessness, rape, motherhood, single-parenting, ethnicity and meetings with God.”<sup>36</sup> A first glance at the Hagar story, from a womanist perspective, would make one inquire where God is in the midst of the pain and mistreatment of this Egyptian woman? As the narrative unfolds, God was concerned for Hagar; and provision was made for her and her son (Gen. 21:8-21). Where there appears to be no hope, God makes a way out of no way. This phrase ‘making a way out of no

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<sup>33</sup> Katie Geneva Cannon, *Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1995), 56.

<sup>34</sup> Cannon, *Katie’s Canon*, 56.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 5.

way' "is a central theme in black women's experiences of struggle and of God's assistance in helping them to overcome struggle."<sup>37</sup>

Monica Coleman maintains that it "is an expression that acknowledges God's presence in providing options that do not appear to exist in the experiences of the past" and it "acknowledges both the role of God and of human agency as new ways break forth into the future."<sup>38</sup> In black consciousness, God's response of survival and quality of life to Hagar is God's response of survival and quality of life to African American women and mothers of slave descent struggling to sustain their families with God's help.<sup>39</sup> As previously stated, one of the defining features of womanist theology is that it "challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women's struggle for survival and for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women's and the family's freedom and well-being."<sup>40</sup> This has been demonstrated in the womanist theological reflection of relating the African American woman experience to the Hagar narrative. This is also a strong motivating factor in this project because for the African American woman there will always be oppressive forces. However, by motivating women to pursue and embrace their passion, this results in empowerment, which continues to challenge these forces.

Another important aspect to consider is how womanist theologians look at or interpret biblical text. The text previously discussed was referred to as the Hagar narrative. However, often times it is referred to as the Abraham or the Abraham and

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<sup>37</sup> Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 33.

<sup>38</sup> Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way*, 33.

<sup>39</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, xvii.



Sarah narrative and Hagar is omitted. In light of how biblical text are read and interpreted over the years, this has caused a hermeneutic of suspicion for womanist theologians. According to Renita Weems, “For the African American (Protestant) women, the Bible has been the only book passed down from her ancestors, and it has been presented to her as the medium for experiencing and knowing the will of the Christian God.”<sup>41</sup> Weems goes further to say that,

Depending upon the social location of the reader, the history of African Americans exemplifies the ways in which the Bible can and has been used, in the name of its supposed authority, to sanction the subjugation and enslavement of people or to instigate insurrection and buttress liberation efforts of oppressed people.<sup>42</sup>

When it comes to interpreting biblical text, womanist theologians challenge the interpreters or the interpretative community. The historical critical method of interpretation claims the text speaks for itself and the meaning rest with male narrators. Weems rewords the statement made by feminist, Judith Fetterley, claiming that, “in order to read texts by men, women have to read like men.”<sup>43</sup> She goes further to maintain that “the African American female reader of the Bible has...been taught to suspend her female identity long enough to see the world through the eyes and ears of the male narrator...she is expected to agree to become the male reader/audience for whom the text was originally written.”<sup>44</sup>

Rather than using this method of interpretation, womanist theology claims that the interpretation is within the interpretative community. Weems asserts that, “how one

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<sup>41</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 63.

<sup>42</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 63.

<sup>43</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 66.

<sup>44</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 66.

reads or interprets the Bible depends in large part on which interpretative community one identifies with at any given time.”<sup>45</sup> For example, Christian African American women belong to at least four communities of readers: American and or Western, African American, female, and Christian.<sup>46</sup> She claims that, “Each community has its own ideas about what the reader should be reading for in a text, and each one is governed by its own vested interests.”<sup>47</sup> This approach to biblical interpretation is referred to as the reader-response theory that, “suggest that meaning does not reside solely in the text...rather, is a product that is created from the encounter between text and the reader.”<sup>48</sup> Reader-response theory asserts that even if one reads a text in a private reading, one would not be engaging in a private reading, for all readers are members of interpretative communities.<sup>49</sup> Although this interpretative approach receives much scrutiny; however, it is an approach that will allow the African American woman to be acknowledged and have a voice as a part of the interpretative community. Within this ministry model, one of the focus and discussions areas will center around biblical interpretation. This will allow the participants the opportunity to discuss the various interpretative approaches addressed by the scholars as well as stress the importance of being a part of the interpretative community.

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<sup>45</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 67.

<sup>46</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 67.

<sup>47</sup> Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle,” 67-68.

<sup>48</sup> Brad Braxton, *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 29-30.

<sup>49</sup> Braxton, *No Longer Slaves*, 30.

Another perspective to consider is how biblical interpretation affects the area of proclamation. One theologian has a concern as to “how a womanist critical evaluative process, understood in its contextual framework, can suggest possibilities for eliminating the negative and derogatory female portraiture in black preaching.”<sup>50</sup> Cannon suggests that,

When we turn to the experience of black churchwomen to establish criteria for interpreting and determining the value of sermonic texts we need to ask what difference it makes that African American Christians hear sermons full of linguistic sexism, in which images of and references to women are seldom positive.<sup>51</sup>

She poses several questions seeking a response from the womanist theologian community such as:

As womanist theologians, what can we do to counter the negative, real-world consequences of sexist wording that brothers and sisters propagate in the guise of Christian piety and virtue? ...As clergywomen committed to the well-being of the African American, how are we refuting gender stereotypes that are dehumanizing, debilitating, and prejudicial to African American women? Can we change male supremacist attitudes by prescribing alternatives to discriminatory word usage? What happens to African American female children when black preachers use the Bible to attribute marvelous happenings and unusual circumstances to an all-male cast of characters?<sup>52</sup>

As part of the solution, Cannon suggests that “In appreciating the complexity of the genius of black preaching, we must be able to analyze how this genre is both sacred and profane, active and passive, life-giving and death dealing.”<sup>53</sup> Cannon further maintains that, “Womanist interpretation calls for a balanced tension between the accuracy of the

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<sup>50</sup> Katie Geneva Cannon, “Womanist Interpretation and Preaching in the Black Church,” in *I Found in Me, A Womanist Biblical Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Mitzi J. Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 64.

<sup>51</sup> Cannon, *I Found in Me*, 64.

<sup>52</sup> Cannon, *I Found in Me*, 65.

<sup>53</sup> Cannon, *I Found in Me*, 66.

spoken word-organization, language, fluidity, and style-and the expressed political aim of our sermonic content.”<sup>54</sup> Concerning a womanist interpretation, Cannon also states that it “requires each component of black homiletic to adhere to the emancipatory practice of a faith community.” In other words, the solution to liberation and empowerment through the sermonic moment requires one to be intentional about the content of their sermon. Going a little further, another scholar states that, “A womanist orientation toward prophetic preaching examines both sermonic content and context.”<sup>55</sup> This supports the need for a ministry model that will allow space to discuss and raise the awareness of interpretation issues involved in preparing for the sermonic moment, from preparation to praxis. It also supports the need for a ministry model that is sensitive to the needs of others by being intentional about empowering others through the preached word to fight the various challenges that plague the African American community.

Empowerment will also take place when more African American women move into the field of biblical scholarship. One scholar noted that, “the work of Black biblical scholarship should become integral to church Bible studies.”<sup>56</sup> Douglas claims that “churches regularly spend thousands of dollars to engage the services of the country’s top preachers, they too must be willing to spend money to engage Black scholars and theologians.”<sup>57</sup> Although she claims that both preaching and teaching are important, Douglas goes a step further to say, “If indeed Black churchpeople are going to fully

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<sup>54</sup> Cannon, *I Found in Me*, 66.

<sup>55</sup> Donna E. Allen, "Womanists as Prophetic Preachers," *Review and Expositor* 109, no. 3 (2012): 387-396, accessed June 20, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>56</sup> Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 136.

<sup>57</sup> Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*, 136.

appreciate their rich religious heritage and its uniqueness and to critique it and grow in relation to it, then they will have to engage in theological scholarship.”<sup>58</sup> If African American women are going to be a part of this teaching community, then more women will need to move in the field of biblical scholarship. According to Mitchem, “there are few black women who specialize in the field of biblical scholarship.... when more black women are involved in that theological discipline, it will be possible to more fully express black women’s biblical interpretation.”<sup>59</sup> Exploring black women’s unique interpretations or hermeneutics of scripture will most likely lead to new expressions of womanist theologies.<sup>60</sup> In this ministry project, as women are motivated and empowered to pursue and embrace their passion, there will be some who will pursue professional and academic degrees and move into the field of biblical scholarship to make more of a difference in the interpretative community.

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), The Commission on Accrediting, shows the statistics of those African American women, in the United States, enrolled and pursuing a theological education. In reviewing Table 2.12-B, it reflects the following enrollment: 4,511 in 2011; 4,409 in 2012; 4,288 in 2013, 4240 in 2014; and 4,147 in 2015.<sup>61</sup> In reviewing Table 2-13 B, for fall 2015, of the 4,147 African American women enrolled, 561 are pursuing Advanced Ministerial Leadership degrees and 131 are

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<sup>58</sup> Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*, 136-137.

<sup>59</sup> Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology*, 118.

<sup>60</sup> Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology*, 118.

<sup>61</sup> The Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting, “2015-2016 Annual Data Tables,” accessed June 4, 2016, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2015-2016-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

pursuing Advanced Theological Research degrees.<sup>62</sup> In Table 3.1 B, it shows the following statistics pertaining to African American female faculty: 77 in 2011; 88 in 2012; 93 in 2013; 98 in 2014; and 96 in 2015.<sup>63</sup> This figure shows overall, within the last five years, there are 19 more African American female faculty. As previously stated by womanist theologian, Stephanie Mitchem, when more African American women move into the area of biblical scholarship, this will impact the womanist voice pertaining to biblical interpretation. As the statistics in Table 3.1 B reflect, overall, there has been an increase in women faculty over the last five years, which should make a difference in the area of biblical scholarship.

Womanist theologians have taken on battles in various capacities for the empowerment of the African American woman including the black church. One theologian maintains that, “The life of a clergywoman is extremely difficult, especially during the current resurgence of ideas relating to male headship and female subordination in the church.”<sup>64</sup> Deborah Austin witnessed this very thing growing up but asserts in her adulthood “I realized that women, denied access to major religious office and positions, had carved out special places for themselves.”<sup>65</sup> These special spaces that Austin is referring to is noted in the works of “C. Eric Lincoln, author, poet and professor of

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<sup>62</sup> The Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting, “2015-2016 Annual Data Tables,” accessed June 4, 2016, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2015-2016-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> The Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting, “2015-2016 Annual Data Tables,” accessed June 4, 2016, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2015-2016-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup> Deborah A. Austin, “In the Middle of Everyday Life: The Spaces Black Clergywomen Create,” in *Perspectives on Womanist Theology* (Atlanta, GA: The ITC Press, 1995), 209.

<sup>65</sup> Austin, “In the Middle of Everyday Life,” 210.

Religion and Culture at Duke University and Lawrence H. Mamiya, professor of sociology at Vassar College.”<sup>66</sup> In the work of these scholars, it states that

Although the public figures have usually been men, black women in each of the seven denominations have carved out their own space for leadership and power in the women’s conventions of their denomination.... Women serve in myriad roles in Black Churches as evangelists, missionaries, stewardesses, deaconesses, lay readers, writers on religious subjects, Sunday school teachers, musicians, choir members and directors, ushers, nurses, custodians, caterers and hostesses for church dinners, secretaries and clerks, counselors, recreation leaders, and directors of vacation Bible schools.<sup>67</sup>

The scholars move further to explain the importance and value of women in the Black church. They note that “...black churches could scarcely have survived without the active support of black women, but in spite of their importance in the life of the church, the offices of preacher and pastor of churches in the historic black churches remain a male preserve and are not generally available to women.”<sup>68</sup>

Ella Pearson Mitchell, a preacher, lecturer, and teacher, understood that era and claims that, “The role of women as ministers was one of many options that were arbitrarily denied.”<sup>69</sup> However, Mitchell further states, “The sweep of history is thus seen to be full of obstacles and oppression for the women who knew themselves to be called of God to preach, but the will of God cannot be forever thwarted.”<sup>70</sup> Mitchell is “regarded almost universally as the dean of black women preachers...has been hailed by countless

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<sup>66</sup> Austin, “In the Middle of Everyday Life,” 210.

<sup>67</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 275.

<sup>68</sup> Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 275.

<sup>69</sup> Ella Pearson Mitchell and Henry H. Mitchell, “Women: A Historical Perspective,” in *Women to Preach or Not to Preach* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1991), 14.

<sup>70</sup> Mitchell and Mitchell, “Women,” 14.

black women preachers who have sought to find their own voice in a profession that has historically been dominated by men.”<sup>71</sup> Through her work as a preacher, teacher, and lecturer, Mitchell has been both a trailblazer and an example that continues to empower women in ministry including today’s womanists and scholars. Mitchell’s accomplishments, being many firsts, have made it possible by paving the way for women to be empowered, find their voice, and to serve in various areas of ministry. To motivate women to embrace their passion is a way of continuing the accomplished works of Ella Mitchell and a way for womanist theology, a liberation theology, to continue to empower the African American woman. As this model of ministry unfolds, with the womanist theological foundation, African American women will be challenged to become visionaries and will be empowered to pursue and give birth to new ministries. There is also the potential to produce great scholars and trailblazers that will not only set an example but will invest in the lives of others through education, advocacy, and mentorship.

In the twenty first century, according to Cleophus LaRue, a scholar and author, “Churches that continue to resist the presence of women in positions of leadership and authority within the ordained clergy could well find themselves marginalized among the marginalized and on the decline in the coming years.”<sup>72</sup> This perspective comes from someone who initially did not embrace women in ministry and was standing in the way of women receiving scholarship money to complete their seminary education until he was

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<sup>71</sup> Samuel Roberts, *Born to Preach: Essays in Honor of the Ministry of Henry and Ella Mitchell* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000), viii.

<sup>72</sup> Cleophus LaRue, *This Is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 3.



convicted. LaRue is of the opinion that “A new generation of African American leaders is coming to more prominent positions of authority in the black church, and any number are showing signs of being more open to progressive styles of leadership, new ways of presenting the gospel, and most important, to allowing all of the faithful to participate and contribute to Christian ministry.”<sup>73</sup> Piggybacking on the word “faithful,” one scholar suggests that, “Homileticians are to subsume personal agendas and preach an uncompromising, transformative gospel based on the biblical text.”<sup>74</sup>

Teresa Fry Brown further states that, “Because the preaching ministry is one of the most revered ministries in black church worship, womanist can influence innumerable sisters and brothers in the trenches, whether praying, singing, testifying, or preaching the major sermon.”<sup>75</sup> Brown also suggested to black women that they “must share the entire Bible with the congregation, warts and all, including male-dominated texts, and ‘bad’ and faithful women’s stories...however, in their own voice, interpret the text from a womanist worldview, finding points of connection with all members of the congregation.”<sup>76</sup> Something to consider regarding sermons is that, “we need to ask the following questions...Do illustrations in sermons refer to women and men only in stereotypical social roles? Do interpretations of Scriptures ever focus on the positive roles in Bible stories? Daniel, Hosea, and Gideon are flush preaching material, but so are

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<sup>73</sup> LaRue, *This Is My Story*, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Teresa Fry Brown, “Avoiding Asphyxiation,” in *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspective on Hope, Salvation and Transformation*, ed. Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 89.

<sup>75</sup> Brown, *Embracing the Spirit*, 89.

<sup>76</sup> Brown, *Embracing the Spirit*, 89-90.

Deborah, Mary and Esther.”<sup>77</sup> This emphasizes the importance of how one can empower and make a difference in the lives of others through preaching. It also stresses the importance of being prepared, intentional, as well as creative to connect with others as the gospel is being proclaimed.

Womanist theology is foundational to this ministry project because of its empowerment focus of the African American woman. The distinctiveness of womanist theology will help give shape to this model of ministry which is formulated to contribute towards continued growth and development by creating space for challenge, intentional discernment, empowerment, encouragement and vision. Womanist theology understands the value and importance of the voice of the African American woman and how it makes a contribution in the church, community, academy and society. This ministry model, with a womanist theology foundation, acts like an “OtherMother.” An OtherMother is defined as “the women (grandmothers, godmothers, aunts, and other women in the community) who are not birth mothers and after oftentimes unrelated by blood, but who shared the responsibility of nurturing and providing guidance in the lives of women.”<sup>78</sup>

OtherMothers are important conduits for lessons on how to resist and claim spaces that are different from the ill-fitting spaces created for black female selves in culture.<sup>79</sup> This ministry model is intentional in making space to encourage African American female ministers where women can be liberated, encouraged and empowered to make a contribution in the church, community, academy and society. The Bible

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<sup>77</sup> Sheron Patterson, *New Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 148.

<sup>78</sup> Stephanie M. Crumpton, *A Womanist Pastoral Theology Against Intimate and Cultural Violence* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72.

<sup>79</sup> Crumpton, *A Womanist Pastoral Theology*, 73.

declares that, “Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith” (Eph. 4:11-12). In this space, women will be encouraged to embrace where God is working in their lives as they serve to equip others in the body of Christ. Through the various areas of ministry of women involved in this ministry model, others will be equipped and empowered.

This ministry model allows for space to dialogue regarding women’s issues surrounding the church, academy, community and society, as one moves to affect change in these various arenas. These places are interrelated in some way that necessitates dialogue to discuss on how one can benefit the other. For example, one scholar is of the opinion that dialogue must take place with both academy and congregation. Bishop Vashti McKenzie states that, “The academy and the congregation must come together in dialogue to formulate, prepare, and express our common struggles, which broaden our expression of our knowledge of God.”<sup>80</sup> This is in order to make “relevant application of theological perspectives for African American women and the African American community at large.”<sup>81</sup> As previously stated by Kelley Brown Douglas, the black church needs to invest in more than great preaching but also in biblical studies by black scholarship, once again stressing the need for collaboration of academy and the church.

Womanist theology is also foundational because it connects past struggles and oppression to today’s struggles and oppression. Although slavery has ended, there are still residuals from this era, as well as others that are pervading the freedom of the

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<sup>80</sup> Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 54.

<sup>81</sup> McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle*, 54.

African American woman in the twenty first century. There are the various “isms” that attempt to hinder the works and the voice of the African American woman. Womanist theology, a liberation theology, values the voice and the work of African American women, and seeks to make a difference in black lives. This is the reason that womanist should be involved in biblical scholarship and the interpretive community, as it pertains to scriptural teaching and preaching, because it allows them to bring a voice that empowers and breaks down oppressive forces that hinders liberation. Among the various scriptures are voiceless people like Hagar (Gen. 16), Tamar (2 Sam. 13), and the concubine of the Levite (Judg. 19) who were not respected. Dialogue inclusive of womanists can break down barriers, remove heresies, and foster emerging conversations to bring understanding from a woman’s perspective of what it means to be devalued but at the same time witness God is in the midst of the pain. These are the same voices that are in the church, academy, community, and the world that advocate for the suffering and the oppressed.

The creation of space for African American women in ministry is just as important in the twenty first century as it was in previous years. Through womanist theology, it has brought to the forefront and keeps in the forefront the value and ongoing need for this space for the development and the empowerment of the whole woman. Within this ministry model, the areas of focus and discussion are spiritual discipline, devotional, Sabbath rest, spiritual goals, spiritual gifts, introspection, sermon preparation, Bible study and /biblical interpretation. This project is formulated to contribute towards continued growth and development by creating space for challenge, intentional discernment, empowerment, encouragement and vision. Due to intentionally investing in

women in ministry, with shared interests, values and expectations, places African American women in position to advocate, to strengthen, and empower others which is the reason that womanist theology is foundational for this ministry project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The general theme of this project is motivating seminary-trained women to embrace their passion and to envision the scope of future ministry. Women over the years have invested in the lives of other women, as well as served as role models, through means of workshops, seminars, conferences, books, groups and mentoring (group and individual). This is to help to prepare, encourage, challenge, inform, and share wisdom that will enable women to carry out the work of ministry in excellence. In this theoretical foundation chapter, discussion will be centered around various models of ministry already in place that are geared to motivate, encourage, and empower those involved in ministry.

These models will be reviewed to see how they are addressing this issue and to see if something can be gleaned that would enhance this present model of ministry. There will be diverse models of ministry in the form of small groups, peer groups, accountability groups, conferences and workshops with the same goal as this model of ministry. Information regarding these models will be gathered from books, articles, and websites including social media. Years ago social media was not the conventional way of engaging people instead other methods of engagement were used. However, when evaluating the current climate of engagement, one scholar states social media “has

changed many aspects of our lives and how we engage with others.”<sup>1</sup> Cleaveland further states that “We shop differently, research differently, communicate differently, and we experience community differently.”<sup>2</sup> In light of the fact this it is another way of engagement and experiencing community, social media models will be considered among the ministry models.

For generations, most preachers, pastors and ministers were all male. When it came to ordaining women, “The AMEZ was the first to ordain a woman—Julia Foote in 1894,” and “AME and CME did not ordain women until the 1940s.”<sup>3</sup> Due to women entering a profession or vocation that was male dominated, books that were written, such as *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development for African American Women in Ministry*, by Vashti McKenzie, was vital to women in ministry. In her book, McKenzie addresses female leadership, historically, biblically, theologically and theoretically. It is informative but it is also instructive. It is informative because it foundationally informs women about women and leadership. It is instructive because it provides instruction based on her experience that can be used as a leadership guide for women in ministry. McKenzie shares sound instruction regarding accountability and responsibility, which will steer women in ministry in the right direction. She provides the following Ten Commandments for African American Women in Ministry:

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Walker Cleaveland, "Pastoral Transitions in the Age of Social Media," *Congregations* 40, no. 3-4 (January 2013): 29, accessed July 27, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>2</sup> Cleaveland, "Pastoral Transitions," 29.

<sup>3</sup> Courtney Lyons, "Breaking Through the Extra-Thick Stained-Glass Ceiling: African American Baptist Women in Ministry," *Review and Expositor* 110, no. 1 (January 2013): 78, accessed September 9, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

1. Thou Shall Be Prepared
2. Thou Shall Be A Team Player
3. Thou Shall Network
4. Thou Shall Be Accountable
5. Thou Shall Empower Others
6. Thou Shall Use Sound Management Principles and Techniques
7. Thou Shall Be Committed To The Servant Leadership Style of Management,  
Exemplified By Jesus Christ
8. Thou Shall Pursue Continuing Education and Personal Development In Order  
To Provide Quality Leadership
9. Thou Shall Develop, Pursue, and Establish A Bible-Centered Ethics and Ethos  
In All Areas of Ministry
10. Thou Shall Be Accessible To Christ And To Those You Are Called To Serve<sup>4</sup>

This book was written twenty years ago and though it may sound simple and obvious to some, but it is still very relevant today because of the ongoing need to nurture others in ministry. This shared wisdom is extremely beneficial for women just starting out in ministry and women who lack direction. This book has served and continues to serve as a model to inform and instruct women in ministry today.

Beyond books, there are other models of ministry with the same goal as this ministry project. Some are in the form of the annual women in ministry conference and others have conferences, workshops and discussions throughout the year. Valerie

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<sup>4</sup> Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 104-110.



Bridgeman, Associate Professor of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible, at Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO), started a ministry called WomanPreach! According to Bridgeman their “mission is to produce a network of preaching women and men who will use their voice in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ, especially as it relates to Womanist/Feminist concerns of equity and justice.”<sup>5</sup> This is done by providing various workshops, seminars, and mentoring to claim one’s prophetic voice. Among them is a preaching academy which “is a four-day intensive academy that empowers and equips attendees to speak in their own prophetic voice whether from the pulpit or in other public arena.”<sup>6</sup> Also provided is “mentoring and leadership, while the academy offers space and time to re-create and rest.”<sup>7</sup> There are various gatherings and workshops throughout the year where dialogue takes place regarding topics of injustice, violence, and interpretation of difficult biblical text. These gatherings also include scholars such as Renita Weems, Gay Byron, and James Cone, who impart knowledge and wisdom to the group. Men are included in some of the discussions because they requested to be in dialogue with the women. Bridgeman states that, “These men, preachers all, said they would value a forum where male preachers could learn together about issues confronting the women they pastor... wanted that conversation to be among female preachers.”<sup>8</sup> This model welcomes the male voice to the table so as to hear and learn about issues concerning women. The primary focus is on women finding their prophetic voice carried

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<sup>5</sup> Valerie Bridgeman, “WomanPreach! Inc.,” accessed July 19, 2016, <http://womanpreach.org/#>.

<sup>6</sup> Bridgeman, “WomanPreach! Inc.,” accessed July 19, 2016, <http://womanpreach.org/#>.

<sup>7</sup> Bridgeman, “WomanPreach! Inc.,” accessed July 19, 2016, <http://womanpreach.org/#>.

<sup>8</sup> Bridgeman, “WomanPreach! Inc.,” accessed July 19, 2016, <http://womanpreach.org/#>.

out in different ways. However, the added voices to the table would be of great benefit to both men and women because this would enable them to learn from one another through dialogue, which could only enhance ministry effectiveness.

The WomanPreach model of ministry allows women to connect in a more intimate setting. However, there are other conferences such as the annual Women In Ministry (WIM) Conference hosted by Cynthia Hale, pastor and founder of Ray of Hope Christian Church. Hale, along with her colleagues, have the same goal as this model of ministry and WomanPreach, but just carried out in a different fashion. According to Hale, “The WIM Conference is a powerful, aspiring, and informative week of coaching, developing, and mentoring for professional women serving in ministry.”<sup>9</sup> Hale also says that, “It fosters dialogue and provides an opportunity for participants to gain valuable insight, relevant information, and cutting edge resources.”<sup>10</sup> The special interest workshops and plenary sessions deal with topics that are relevant to women in ministry such as preaching, self-care, change, and pastoring. They also deal with issues that plague our community such as human trafficking or how to handle same gender relationships within the church. This model of ministry, in the form of a conference, brings women together once a year for the purpose set forth by Cynthia Hale. However, because it takes place once a year, only distant relationships are formed. Although it is structured to meet the needs of women serving in ministry, there is no follow up until the

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<sup>9</sup> Tonya Sumter, “Women in Ministry Conference,” *Cynthia L. Hale Ministries*, accessed July 22, 2016, [http://cynthiahaleministries.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&Itemid=34&id=28](http://cynthiahaleministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&Itemid=34&id=28).

<sup>10</sup> Sumter, “Women in Ministry Conference,” accessed July 22, 2016, [http://cynthiahaleministries.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&Itemid=34&id=28](http://cynthiahaleministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&Itemid=34&id=28).

conference convenes the next year. This can be seen as a disadvantage for those women who require accountability with regular meetings with ongoing conversations.

In the twenty first century, social media is playing a major role in connecting clergy into groups that fit their needs, especially the younger generation of clergy. Studies are being done to determine social media's use and effectiveness for clergy as a source of accountability, empowerment, and encouragement. Christian Theological Seminary did a project called the New Media Project to gain perspective on clergy using social media for support today in light of the past. According to this project "One significant difference between church leadership today and decades past is how pastors network for support, professional assistance, ideas, and devotional exercises such as prayer. Today, increasing numbers of pastors—especially younger pastors—network online using social media tools."<sup>11</sup> The social media sites include groups ranging from peer, mentoring, resources, pastoral, preaching, and closed Facebook sites, etc. There are also specific groups according to age, gender, denomination, and cultures. An advantage to being connected to an on-line clergy group is that a person can connect to a wider range of people that broadens one's context. Also, there are a wide variety of groups to choose from making it likely to locate a group that fit the needs of that person. Much like this ministry project, "Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion," these clergy websites contribute towards continued growth and development by creating space for empowerment and encouragement. There are various ways to communicate including Skype and Facetime, but the ability to meet and fellowship in person on a

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<sup>11</sup> "New Media Project," Christian Theological Seminary, accessed July 23, 2016, <http://www.cpx.edu/newmedia/resources/clergy-networks>.

regular basis is slim which may be seen as a disadvantage. There are also those who believe that, “In our age of virtual everything, our sense of presence to each other and to God has diminished.”<sup>12</sup> Holmes also states that, “Knowing each other and God intimately takes investment of time and of ourselves.”<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, others view the virtual community as an advantage and view it as just another avenue to be engaged and experience community, according to Cleaveland [Adam]. Both scholars have compelling arguments that warrant further discussion. In the meantime, ministry models are being created with both communities in mind.

Covenant Discipleship Groups are another model of ministry with the same focus as this ministry project. In the book, *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups*, Gayle Watson states that, “a Covenant Discipleship Group is where Christian disciples give an account of their walk with Christ in a way that enables other members of the group to practice their own discipleship more faithfully.”<sup>14</sup> Watson adds that these groups are “intended solely for mutual accountability and prayerful support for living as disciples in the world.”<sup>15</sup> The groups can be formulated within a congregation including clergy or in a separate clergy support group. Watson is of the opinion that “...ordained clergy need mutual accountability for their discipleship no less than laity.”<sup>16</sup> Watson focused on Covenant Discipleship Groups within a congregation but left enough room to create or

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<sup>12</sup> J. William Holmes, "Virtual Community?: The Absence of Presence," *Word & World* 35, no. 2 (January 2015): 183, accessed July 31, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>13</sup> Holmes, "Virtual Community?," 183.

<sup>14</sup> Gayle Watson, *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 27.

<sup>15</sup> Watson, *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups*, 28.

<sup>16</sup> Watson, *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups*, 29.

structure a group for clergy with a Covenant Discipleship component that would benefit this group. The Covenant Discipleship Groups are designed to include scripture, prayer and worship. In light of the flexibility of the Covenant Discipleship Group ministry model, it would be advantageous for any group, whether congregational or a clergy support group. Also, because of the vocational nature of clergy, the clergy groups would be designed differently to fit the needs of the clergy within that context, which is the same focus as this ministry project.

In Barbara Gilbert's book, *Who Ministers to the Ministers? A Study of Support Systems for Clergy and Spouses*, there are findings from her research that will help shape most clergy groups. Gilbert has done various interviews and questionnaires to help arrive at the information that she shares in this book. Based on her findings, she declares that there are important ingredients needed in order to have a successful peer support group. They are as follows:

1. Common interest or relationships carried over from another context
2. Small size of 4-6 persons;
3. One or two persons willing to risk openness and vulnerability; (it is especially helpful if there is a person who is perceived as being "strong and competent" and who is willing to be vulnerable)
4. Commitment to regular attendance
5. Ground rules about confidentiality and group process;
6. Regular meetings over a long enough that trusting relationships are built.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Barbara G. Gilbert, *Who Ministers to the Ministers? A Study of Support Systems for Clergy and Spouses* (New York City, NY: The Alban Institute, Inc., 1987), 58-59.

These ingredients for success help to affirm the foundational works of this ministry project. A solid foundation laying out the commitment and expectations help to establish a mindset within the group that a successful outcome is anticipated including the building of trusting relationships. One of the things that are needed in order to have a successful support group is trust within the group. In defining trust, it means “confidence” with “the opposite of trust-distrust-is suspicion.”<sup>18</sup> Stephen Covey states that, “When you trust people, you have confidence in them-in their integrity and in their abilities.”<sup>19</sup> Listening also plays a major role in having a successful group because of the sharing nature of the group. Listening is “more than being in a forum where different opinions are being expressed in order to express one’s own opinions.”<sup>20</sup> One should recognize “that there are other ways of looking at the world, other experiences and insights, other understandings with which one has yet to engage.”<sup>21</sup> True listening implies an openness, a preparedness to be challenged, to grow, to change.<sup>22</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book, *Life Together*, stressed the value of listening. Bonhoeffer explained that, “The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them.”<sup>23</sup> He moves further to say “...that listening can be a greater service than speaking.”<sup>24</sup> Both

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen M. R. Covey with Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Covey with Merrill, *The Speed of Trust*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Clive Barrett, “Healing and Peace,” in *Wounds that Heal*, ed. Jonathan Baxter (Great Britain, UK: Ashford Colour Press, 2007), 70.

<sup>21</sup> Barrett, “Healing and Peace,” 70.

<sup>22</sup> Barrett, “Healing and Peace,” 70.

<sup>23</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1954), 97.

<sup>24</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 97.

listening and trust are conveyed and implied in Gilbert's ingredients for success and are relevant for the success of this ministry project.

After the foundation is laid, then the group can proceed with areas of focus that would foster growth and development such as spiritual disciplines. According to Dallas Willard, "A major service of spiritual disciplines such has solitude...fasting...worship..., and service—is to cause the duplicity and malice that is buried in our will and character to surface and be dealt with."<sup>25</sup> Willard further claims that,

Those disciplines make room for the Word and the Spirit to work in us, and they permit destructive feelings—feelings that are usually veiled by standard practices and circumstances and by long accepted rationalizations - to be perceived and dealt with for what they are: our will and not God's will.<sup>26</sup>

In Richard Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline*, he speaks of the "inward (meditation, prayer, fasting and study); outward (simplicity, solitude, submission, and service); and corporate (confession, worship, guidance, and celebration)"<sup>27</sup> spiritual disciplines. Foster maintains that, "Spiritual growth is the purpose of the Disciplines."<sup>28</sup> He states that, "classical Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths" and "invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm."<sup>29</sup> This book can be used in different settings including in a classroom, church, small group, peer groups, and individual as well as the book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the*

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<sup>25</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 155.

<sup>26</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 155.

<sup>27</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998).

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 1.

*Christian Life*, by Donald S. Whitney. Both books provide a biblical and theological groundwork for spiritual disciplines. Both recognize the disciplines as a means of grace. Foster says that, “God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us.”<sup>30</sup> Whitney states that, “God has given us the Spiritual Disciplines as a means of receiving His grace and growing in Godliness” and by the disciplines “we place ourselves before God for Him to work in us.”<sup>31</sup> Whitney’s book includes the following spiritual disciplines: Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude, journaling and learning.”<sup>32</sup> Although a little different than Foster, it still moves one toward growth and development. Along those same lines is a book called *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* that serves as a model for spiritual transformation using the spiritual disciplines. Ruth Haley Barton states that, “Although this book’s emphasis is on personal spiritual disciplines, the spiritual journey was never meant to be taken alone.”<sup>33</sup> The disciplines are: “longing for more, solitude, Scripture, prayer, honoring the body, self-examination, discernment, Sabbath, and a rule of life.”<sup>34</sup> For this model, like other models, it lays the foundation and commitment for a small group. It is recommended that the group go chapter-by-chapter, reading individually and discussing corporately plus addressing the reflection questions. All of the books can be used as a

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<sup>30</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 19.

<sup>32</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>34</sup> Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, 169-182.



model for clergy peer groups because it allows for discussion as well as practice. It can be challenging by moving one into more of a disciplined life but also rewarding because it fosters growth and development. Incorporating the spiritual disciplines into any small or peer group can only enrich the experience. Spiritual disciplines from these books will be used in this model of ministry for that very reason.

Clergy enter into groups for a variety of reasons such as for growth and development, space to share concerns regarding ministry, and sacred space to be vulnerable, to name a few. Due to the demands of doing ministry, some sort of covenant or peer group would definitely be beneficial. Christina Braudaway-Bauman started a clergy peer group and shared her findings in the article *Peer Power*. According to Bauman, “In my conversations with these pastors, I stressed my hope that this peer group would be different, designed to help them figure out what they themselves needed for them to be sustained and renewed in ministry and how they could engage in conversation with colleagues in more authentic and meaningful ways.”<sup>35</sup> Bauman shared some of the responses from persons involved in this group such as “‘It’s been so healing to hear that my struggles are shared struggles.’ And from another: ‘I’m amazed at the clarity and insight we draw out of each other.’”<sup>36</sup> Another person shared that “Without the peer group, he might no longer even be in ministry.”<sup>37</sup> It shows that the demands on clergy can bring on anxieties and it affirms these groups have been beneficial.

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<sup>35</sup> Christina Braudaway-Bauman, "Peer Power: The Promise of Clergy Support Groups," *The Christian Century* 129, no. 1 (January 11, 2012): 22-25, accessed July 23, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>36</sup> Bauman, "Peer Power," 24.

<sup>37</sup> Bauman, "Peer Power," 24.

Another discipline that is working on the same problem as this ministry project is the field of psychology. This discipline was chosen because of its commonalities with the work of clergy, such as pastoral counseling, as well as the need for the discipline itself through clergy peer groups or other means of support. Another reason this discipline was chosen because one of the focus areas is introspection. Introspection is defined as “a reflective looking inward: an examination of one's own thoughts and feelings.”<sup>38</sup> Included in introspection will be the topic of self-care, which is vital because of the stress associated with this vocation. According to Andrew Miles and Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, “Research over the past several decades indicate that pastoral work can place substantial demands on clergy, which in turn can promote psychological distress.”<sup>39</sup> They move further to compare findings of the non-clergy population to the clergy population. Miles and Bell, based on their findings, are of the opinion that “Studies of support groups in nonclergy populations indicate that support groups can reduce psychological distress because they provide social support, provide psychological resources, and facilitate beneficial social comparisons.”<sup>40</sup> As for clergy groups, the authors stated these groups “seem to provide many of the same resources, suggesting that they could be applied to manage the stresses of pastoral work and to improve clergy mental health.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “introspection,” Merriam-Webster.com, accessed August 21, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/introspection>.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Miles and Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, “Overcoming the Challenges of Pastoral Work?: Peer Support Groups and Psychological Distress Among United Methodist Church Clergy,” *Sociology of Religion* 74, no. 2 (January 2013): 200, accessed July 23, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>40</sup> Miles and Proeschold-Bell, “Overcoming the Challenges of Pastoral Work?,” 203.

<sup>41</sup> Miles and Proeschold-Bell, “Overcoming the Challenges of Pastoral Work?,” 203-204.

There will be a variation of models with a psychological and mental emphasis. One of the models is a self-help model that will be reviewed because of its similar attributes of clergy peer groups. Self-help groups are considered “groups of people who come together to help one another overcome or better cope with a common problem, situation, illness, handicap, addiction or other stressful life situation.”<sup>42</sup> These groups also “provide the unique sense of social support and comfort in knowing ‘you are not alone,’ are also diverse in the ways in which they operate.”<sup>43</sup> Self-help groups are also considered mutual help groups, because “mutual aid is their primary characteristic, all members recognize their potential for helping others within the group.”<sup>44</sup> The group members share the same common problem and “are provided an opportunity to pool information, skills, resources and hopes, while diminishing fears and raising self-confidence.”<sup>45</sup> Self-help groups, much like clergy peer groups, offer much needed support within the group. Self-help groups can also be formed within a congregation because of the common issues and concerns that accompany daily living. Self-help groups could fall under the category of “self-care.” According to Donald L. Odom, “Self-care is defined as personal care without medical or other professional consultation.”<sup>46</sup> Odom is of the opinion that clergy do not practice what they preach

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<sup>42</sup> Edward J. Madara and Barrie Alan Peterson, "Clergy and Self-Help Groups: Practical and Promising Relationships," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 41, no. 3 (September 1987): 214, accessed July 27, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>43</sup> Madara and Peterson, "Clergy and Self-Help Groups," 214.

<sup>44</sup> Madara and Peterson, "Clergy and Self-Help Groups," 214.

<sup>45</sup> Madara and Peterson, "Clergy and Self-Help Groups," 214.

<sup>46</sup> Donald L. Odom, "The Importance of Self Care for Ministry Leaders," *The Living Pulpit (Online)* 21, no. 3 (July 2012): 35, accessed August 27, 2016), *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

because though they operate as caregivers, they fail to care for themselves. Since there is no accountability for self-care, there may be no visible or physical repercussions until one reaches burnout. One of the ways he suggests to remedy this is to “Develop or join a support group with other ministers, creating a safe space to talk about ministry concerns that keep you up at night.”<sup>47</sup> In comparing the self-help or mutual help groups to clergy peer groups (self-care), it would appear that clergy peer groups would be more beneficial to clergy because it requires more structure and accountability in light of the vocational responsibility.

It has already been noted that the demands are great for pastoral work among clergy and this can result in anxieties of some nature. In that same vein, authors Hands and Ferh address the issue of emotionally healthy spirituality. The authors write in *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy* “to develop and maintain a healthy personal spirituality, the clergyperson needs a situation where he or she can regularly be an equal among equals (rather than the spiritual leaders of others).”<sup>48</sup> According to Hands and Ferh, “most clergy are relatively isolated, emotionally and spiritually, without enough peer support.”<sup>49</sup> The authors claim that “participating in a genuine spiritual community as an equal is very important for a cleric’s health and well-being.”<sup>50</sup> Hands and Ferh suggested that they [clergypersons] “seeking to grow spiritually will ordinarily need also to work

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<sup>47</sup> Odom, “The Importance of Self Care for Ministry Leaders,” 36.

<sup>48</sup> Donald R. Hands and Wayne L. Ferh, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others* (New York, NY: The Alban Institute, 1993), 64.

<sup>49</sup> Hands and Ferh, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*, 67.

<sup>50</sup> Hands and Ferh, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*, 67.

with a spiritual director.”<sup>51</sup> The authors are of the opinion “A good spiritual director will challenge a person who is ignoring or avoiding significant personal realities of life while talking all the while about God.”<sup>52</sup> Hands and Ferh’s work was “born out of working intensively with five hundred seriously troubled clergy in an inpatient treatment program at the St. Barnabas Center in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin,” seeking to “point the way to a comprehensive spiritual recovery process described in detail in this book.”<sup>53</sup> The findings in this book support the need for both peer groups and spiritual directors, to help promote emotionally healthy spirituality.

Kirk Jones points out in his book, *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers*, a list of duties that clergy are expected to carry out. Jones states that, “One of the main reasons for pastoral stress and burnout is the vast number of tasks that pastors are asked to perform, and perform well.”<sup>54</sup> Jones claims that “churches are not knowingly or intentionally abusing their pastors” but rather “the proliferation of unrealistic pastoral expectations in our churches is the result of uncritical acceptance of traditional expectations that are augmented by new demands in our changing world.”<sup>55</sup> In his book, Jones brings to light the weightiness of clergy but he also offers strategies that will help remedy the stresses associated with clergy responsibilities by promoting

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<sup>51</sup> Hands and Ferh, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*, 64.

<sup>52</sup> Hands and Ferh, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*, 65.

<sup>53</sup> Iva May Foster, "Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register* 84, no. 3 (September 1994): 37, accessed August 21, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>54</sup> Kirk Jones, *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Jones, *Rest in the Storm*, 1.

self-care. The author also offers warning signs of clergy overload as a way of bringing to one's awareness that self-care is needed. Jones recommends other resources as a way to continue pursuing self-care. He may have alluded to peer or other groups but the emphasis is on strategies for self-care. Self-awareness and self-care are richly needed but it would appear beneficial if clergy could connect to others for accountability. Both clergy peer groups and spiritual directors can help promote self-care and help to remedy anxieties. However, it is vital that one must be able to have self-awareness for the need of self-care that justifies the need for introspection as a focus area in this ministry project.

In the article, *Surviving Clergy Burnout*, Arthur Schaefer and Steve Jacobsen conveyed that “spiritual leaders suffer from burnout, depression, and loneliness” and they “identif[y] twelve common factors that can lead to clergy burnout and seven positive counter-measures that can be taken.”<sup>56</sup> The burnout factors include the overall basic responsibilities of clergy such as expectations, role conflict, multi-tasking, boundaries, finances, leadership, and health. However, the burnout factor that stands out is the health issue because it includes both physical and mental health. In factor number ten, the authors bring to light that the work related stress, due to the demands of the job, can lead to the failing physical health of clergy. Another way to put is that clergy are at risk of deterioration of both mental and physical health. In effort to have a positive impact addressing this problem, the authors offer the following the positive counter-measures:

1. Allowing Barns to Burn Down: Developing Honest Expectations for Oneself and One's Congregation.

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<sup>56</sup> Arthur Schaefer and Steve Jacobsen, "Surviving Clergy Burnout," *Encounter* 70, no. 1 (January 2009): 37, accessed August 20, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

2. Strategic Modeling for Clergy: Self-Assessment Wellness Audit
3. The Institutional Values Audit: A Valuable Tool for Lay and Professional Leadership
4. Moving From An Employee Relationship to One Based on a Mutual Covenant of Respect and Mission
5. Moving from Burnout to Renewal through Physical Health and the Recovery of Sabbath
6. Ethical Decision-Making
7. Changing the Situation<sup>57</sup>

Among the positive counter-measures are self-assessment audits and institutional values audit. According to the authors, “‘self-assessment wellness audit’ based on a business time management model, is designed to help the spiritual leaders better understand those areas he or she wishes to explore and how to prioritize activities.”<sup>58</sup> The bottom line is to help clergy to understand they “cannot be ‘all things to all people,’ and this tool helps clarify what we can be.”<sup>59</sup> The other audit listed is the institutional values audit and it “is used to help determine the values of the congregation so one better understands the culture in which they are working and its impact on what they are becoming.”<sup>60</sup> Another item on the list is a tool to help with ethical decision-making. All of the other positive counter-measures are important, but it would appear that the assessments are valuable

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<sup>57</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 47-63.

<sup>58</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 51.

<sup>59</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 51.

<sup>60</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 53.

and necessary because they measure outcomes that can bring awareness, direction, and reflection.

The authors indicate that clergy burnout can be resolved while remaining in the same congregation. However, there are instances where it is not possible so the authors give three solutions under item number seven called “changing the situation.” The first solution is to change churches to another congregation. The second is to change positions while still operating within the same vocation. Thirdly, the solution is “to leave the vocation altogether and seek another profession.”<sup>61</sup> According to Parker Palmer, vocation “comes from a voice ‘in here’ calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.”<sup>62</sup> Another scholar helps to shape the term “vocation” by stating that it “begins with where we are, but it is really all about the summons to go in search of ourselves in responding to God’s call through Christ.”<sup>63</sup> These definitions were provided because both show that the calling is from God. If the calling is from God, the question is, can one actually leave what God has called them to do? Can one actually leave their God given vocation and seek another profession as suggested by Schaefer and Jacobsen? Although the authors admit that it is a hard decision but maintain that, “it is important to make changes by means of sober reflecting and wisdom seeking, not simply out of frustration or impatience.”<sup>64</sup> In light of the

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<sup>61</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 64.

<sup>62</sup> Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 10.

<sup>63</sup> James Francis, "Discipleship and Vocation: Living Theology Today," *Rural Theology* 7, no. 2 (January 2009): 76, accessed August 31, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>64</sup> Schaefer and Jacobsen, “Surviving Clergy Burnout,” 65.



sensitivity surrounding leaving a vocation for a profession, any response to this issue would be rather ambiguous and open for various interpretations.

In an effort to address clergy fitness, G. Lloyd Rediger, in his book, *Clergy Killers*, points out that in his experience, “pastors do not typically spend enough time on bodily fitness” and further states that clergy “who topped the actuarial tables at insurance companies, have deteriorated to a point where our health resembles national averages.”<sup>65</sup> He also states that, “Because pastoring has become a high-stress profession, we can expect our unfit bodies, minds, and spirits to succumb to the maladies of stress we see all around us--unless we make better use of the fitness metaphor.”<sup>66</sup> Rediger is concerned about fitness for the body, mind and spirit and offers ways that fitness can be achieved for all three areas:

- Fitness for the body includes: nutrition, rest and self-management
- Fitness for the mind includes: mental exercises, nutrition, computers, rest and dealing with anger
- Fitness for the spirit includes: five wholeness principles represented in the Bible
  1. Principle 1: Wholeness is a functional state of being.
  2. Principle 2: Wholeness begins with spiritual health, which is union and communion with God, and all creation;
  3. Principle 3: Wholeness is an inclusive more than an individual experience.

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<sup>65</sup> G. Lloyd Rediger, *Clergy Killers* (Grove Heights, MN: Logos Productions, Inc., 1997), 165.

<sup>66</sup> Rediger, *Clergy Killers*, 165.

4. Principle 4: Wholeness is not perfection.
5. Principle 5: Fulfilling God's purposes, which is crucial to wholeness, requires more than the potential for healing and growth that is built into our bodies, minds and spirits.<sup>67</sup>

Much like Schaefer [Arthur] and Jacobsen [Steve], Redinger recognizes the importance of taking care of both the mental and physical health of clergy. He heightens the awareness of the importance of fitness by spelling it out, therefore, making it a model that can be followed by clergy. It would prove beneficial to any clergy group that takes self-care seriously with a desire for communal support and accountability.

In the book, *Group Counseling: Strategies and Skills*, it provides a wealth of information regarding groups and group leadership. One of the models is a group therapy model. The ideal therapy group is composed of five to eight members, with the membership remaining constant once the group has begun.<sup>68</sup> Much like the formation of any group, including a clergy peer group, the roles and responsibilities are laid out as well as the focus. The authors claim that, "Therapy groups differ from other groups in that therapy groups are supposed to move to a deeper personal level."<sup>69</sup> In one of the group therapy models, the leader, leading a group of patients at mental health center, introduces the topic and the members respond. The leader can direct them to go deeper by asking probing questions. This model, although a different discipline, would work within this ministry model and context. With there being several focus areas, the group

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<sup>67</sup> Rediger, *Clergy Killers*, 166-176.

<sup>68</sup> Ed Jacobs, Robert Masson, Riley Harvill, and Christine Schimmel, *Group Counseling: Strategies and Skills* (Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole, 2012), 341.

<sup>69</sup> Jacobs, Masson, Harvill, and Schimmel, *Group Counseling*, 345.

will be facilitated in a way to ask questions and lead discussions that will promote much thought and reflection.

In looking at the various models of ministry, they all have been either foundational or have added something to this ministry model. Out of Vashti McKenzie's ministry experience, she was able to share wisdom to guide other women in ministry, including women that felt a calling but was either denied, not acknowledge or failed to share with her pastor regarding a calling into ministry. The ministry nuggets that she shared continue to be relevant, twenty years later. The book helps to shape one's character, discipline, and preparation for anyone entering ministry as well as to empower those already in ministry.

Scholars such as Valerie Bridgeman with *WomanPreach* and Cynthia Hale with the yearly Women in Ministry Conference have also been foundational. These models are intentional about inviting women in ministry, especially African American women, into space where mentorship, encouragement, continuing education can take place. Hale's conference is once a year but Bridgeman's ministry is ongoing throughout the year. Both have been foundational because the model "Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion" invites women in ministry into sacred space with the same primary focus. Martin [Nicole] maintains that, "sacred spaces with others allow you to share, vent, and confess some of the unique situations of ministry without feeling judged or fixed."<sup>70</sup> The scholars [McKenzie, Bridgeman, and Hale] are important because they have been trailblazers for this ministry context as well as for many African American women in

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<sup>70</sup> Nicole Massie Martin, *Made to Lead: Empowering Women for Ministry*, Kindle Locations 1001-1002.

ministry. It has permitted this ministry project to become a more personal and intimate aspect of what they have accomplished on more of a national level on a periodic basis.

In looking at the various models of ministry that are formed to promote growth and development, empowerment, discernment and vision, there is much in common with other models that are formed to promote mental health. Both groups are structured in a small group setting, if desired, which allows for a more intimate setting where others are allowed to share and where trusting relationships can form. Peer or clergy groups for growth and development, empowerment, discernment, and vision can also produce spiritual health for clergy. The same goes for other clergy groups that gather for the sharing of ministry concerns or being in community with other clergy that have the same vocational stress and anxieties. Depending on the needs of the groups will determine which ministry model or discipline model will be used. There appears to be a shared interest when groups are formed which makes it possible to glean from the various groups to enhance this ministry project.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

In my context, within the last ten years, there has been an increase of African American women in pursuit of a seminary education. Once achieving a seminary degree, the next step is to determine what to do with the tools received in seminary as one continues to move forward in ministry. The context is within a small intimate community, and the accountability and motivational group, in a larger area, the city of Louisville. Within the context, there was a need for accountability and motivation for trained women to embrace their passion, to help enhance ministry effectiveness. Enhanced ministry effectiveness takes place as one becomes intentional and aggressive in their own personal development for ministry. This project, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion,” resulted from my passion to develop an effective model of ministry that would motivate women to embrace their passion, leading them to their next level of ministry.

In order to help formulate this project, research has been done through foundational research in the areas of biblical, historical, theological and theoretical, providing knowledge and wisdom, resulting in the implementation of this ministry project. The foundational work was key in order to broaden one’s perspective, as well as affirm the direction of this ministry model and the need for it in the twenty first century. Down through the years, women in ministry have made their way to the forefront and

have been an asset in every area of ministry. Today, this legacy continues through women who have also said yes to God and operate in obedience to this call. In looking back to the biblical foundation paper, one can witness women being used in powerful ways that spur one on as they are used by God. Like women of the past, has witnessed in the historical and theological foundation chapters, the ministry journey is not without a struggle. Regardless of the fight, whether it is to preach or to be a part of the interpretive community, it remains a twenty first century struggle, so the fight must continue. One can also witness the need to continue the ongoing work in the theoretical chapter. The theoretical chapter shows the creation of space for African American women in ministry as a means to encourage, empower and educate. All of the foundational chapters have either contributed, challenged, or affirmed this model of ministry, “Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion.”

### **Methodology**

The qualitative method is the research methodology. This project was more interested in actual data versus numbers. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.<sup>1</sup> The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis, inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.<sup>2</sup> Pre and post test questions were used as a part of collecting data.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 4.

Questions were asked from seven different areas: spiritual discipline, Sabbath, spiritual goals, spiritual gifts, introspection/self-care, sermon preparation, and biblical interpretation. For each area, there are ten questions with the first three being multiple choice, the next four true or false and the last three are multiple choice. The short answer questions were asked as a way of giving the participants a chance to verbally share as it pertained to that particular area. Sometimes multiple choice and true or false questions fail to completely reflect one's true response which is the reason for the short answer questions. Data was collected and compiled in the form of charts and graphs as a way of measuring the outcome of this project.

Interviews were done at the end of the project that inquired about the overall project, the community of shared space, the impact of the project, the job performance of the facilitator, and the continuance of this group. The final interview questions were based off the final interview questions in the doctoral work of Nicholas Meade.<sup>3</sup> After collecting all data, responses have been reviewed and compiled. This is another way of measuring the outcome of this project and to help address the hypothesis.

There were eight group sessions held at a conference suite in Louisville, Kentucky. There was a total of seven participants. Prior to the implementation date, the facilitator had spoken with each participant regarding the project. The purpose of this project was also put in writing along with what it hoped to accomplish. Also in writing, it spelled out what would take place during the eight week sessions. This included the following areas of focus: spiritual discipline/devotion, Sabbath rest/introspection, spiritual goals, gifts, and discipline, biblical study and biblical interpretation/sermon

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Meade, "Emerging Youth Attraction and Retention" (PhD diss., United Theological Seminary, 2015).

preparation. A calendar with the meeting dates was also included. Over the course of the eight week sessions, two sessions were spent on each focus area. Each focus area fell under one of the foundation papers as follows:

Sessions 1-2: Biblical- Bible Study: Old Testament Scripture: Judges 4:1-16;  
New Testament Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Sessions 3-4: Historical: spiritual discipline, spiritual gifts, and spiritual goals

Sessions 5-6: Theological: interpretation and sermon preparation

Sessions 7-8: Theoretical: Sabbath rest, self-care and introspection

### **Implementation**

The implementation date for this project was December 3, 2016. Prior to the start date each participant was e-mailed a questionnaire to complete. Copies of the questionnaire were also brought to the session to ensure they were completed and given back to the facilitator. The questionnaires were not discussed unless there was a question. Discussion would take place following the post-test when participants could compare their pre and post questionnaire responses.

During the initial session, discussion was centered around the Old Testament paradigm of Judges 4:1-16. The Old Testament character was Deborah, a female prophet and judge, who was vocal, visible and authoritative. As this text was studied as a group, it was determined that just as Deborah was raised up to be a leader, women in this context have also been raised up for such a time as this. Trained women in this context are in a position to move into arenas where there have been low to no female representation, much like Deborah. The participants began to see themselves as trailblazers and catalyst for change; raised up for the purpose of leading, teaching, training, empowering,



protecting, nurturing, and encouraging the people of God. The discussion moved from envisioning to the pursuit of a plan of implementation. This was a very powerful study and participants were encouraged and spurred on because of it.

On December 17, 2016, the second session, the discussion centered around the New Testament paradigm of Luke 1:26-38, Mary, the mother of Jesus. Since discussion also fell in line with Advent season, this made this discussion rich. Mary was depicted as a young virgin girl, as witnessed in the text, and God intervened in a young virgin girl's life. There was a major emphasis on Mary when she said yes and relinquished her plan to be obedient to the plan of God. Her response to the assignment of God was "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." This model of ministry set forth is to motivate trained women to embrace their passion but it is also tied to sacrifice in pursuit of the will of God. The dialogue among the group embraced the fact that serving God and pursuing God's will calls for obedience to the will of God. It was also communicated among the group that like Mary's response, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word," allows God to work in and through one's life in unique ways for the advancement of the kingdom. The following rhetorical question was raised, "will you allow God to use you as a conduit for God's plan?"

The third session was held on January 17, 2016, and the discussion centered around spiritual goals, spiritual gifts and spiritual discipline. The definition was tossed around as to the meaning of spiritual goals as well as the question, "do you have any spiritual goals?" The question was also raised as to whether having spiritual goals makes you look spiritual ambitious or outside the will of God? This made for a great discussion

with the outcome that there is a need to seriously consider setting some spiritual goals as one is pursuing their passion. As the spiritual goals were being discussed, the topic of spiritual disciplines emerged. There was a connection and it appeared that some of the spiritual goals pertained to the practicing of the spiritual disciplines. The group was compelled to combine the disciplines of prayer, meditation, and study subject resulting in an intentional devotional life. There was also an emphasis on journaling and it appeared that most of the group practice this discipline on a periodic basis. (Note that journaling was not included among the spiritual disciplines in the questionnaire). One of the participants demonstrated bullet journaling which acts more like a planner/to do list/diary system to help those who are intentional about staying on target as one moves toward their spiritual goals. This demonstration was very enlightening for those in the group who have never heard of or experienced this type of discipline before.

During the same session, spiritual gifts were shared and discussed. All of the participants had taken at least one spiritual gifts assessment. What emerged from this conversation was the fact that as one had spiritually matured over the years, either the number of spiritual gifts had increased or a better understanding was grasped. It was even felt by some participants that as they had matured over years, they had also grown in their spiritual gifts. The discussion during this session was very powerful because all participants recognized that spiritual goals, spiritual gifts and spiritual discipline play a vital part in growth and maturity. It is necessary that these things are given consideration when pursuing and moving forward in ministry. What made this such a phenomenal experience was that at the beginning of the next session, on January 21, 2017, the discussion was continued. Spiritual discipline was once again discussed with

an emphasis on prayer; specifically tarrying (or lingering) in prayer. In light of the participants having a busy schedule and distractions are many, an app called echo was recommended as a way to help with prayer, and to help promote a healthy prayer life. The group recognized that a benefit of a healthy prayer life is that it helps one to prepare for Sunday morning. It also helps to spiritually empower one as one enters worship to carryout one's ministerial responsibilities.

During the January 21, 2017 session, the focus was on the lives of the following five women in the historical foundation paper: Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, Julia Foote, Florence Randolph, and Pauli (Anna Pauline) Murray. Brought to the discussion was the fact that although these women had differences, they had in common the motivation to passionately pursue their dreams and goals to make a difference on behalf of others. These women addressed issues dealing with sanctification, holiness, social change, civil rights, the right to partake in the life of the church, the right to come to the communion table, just to name a few. They also came through a generation where there were few to no female representation in pursuit of their passion in ministry. It was also during a time where male dominance was prevalent in the home, workplace and the church. After laying out the foundation of these trailblazers, one could see the significant impact these women have on women in ministry today. The participants could see similarities, and differences in their own pursuit of ministry including successes and struggles. Although the participants were familiar with these trailblazers, discussing them in community, as it relates to women in ministry, made this experience valuable. The woman that generated the most conversation around was Pauli Murray. Murray was from a middle class, religious family which made her the recipient of privileges not afforded by some of the

other pioneers. After a distinguished career as a lawyer, educator, and activist, on January 8, 1977, at the age of sixty-seven, Pauli Murray was ordained an Episcopal priest at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.<sup>4</sup> This would make Murray “the first black female, and the second African American, to be ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church.”<sup>5</sup> What was also shared with the participants was the fact that Murray also suffered with psychological issues stemming from her past and how Murray suppressed desires in her life in order to pursue the greater work. The discussion was very relevant to what it means to be motivated to embrace your passion. All of the historical figures are examples of what it means to be motivated to pursue and embrace your passion, and it has major significance on this model of ministry. The discussion also reverted to the spiritual disciplines and goals of these historical women. It was noted that although there may not have been a mention of spiritual disciplines and goals, it was evident in their life’s work they did exist and were practiced.

Session number five was held on February 4, 2017 with an emphasis on the theological foundation chapter. The topic of discussion was interpretation of scripture. At this particular session, three male colleagues from seminary were invited to join the group for this session only. Two of the men were pastors and the third worked in the school system. Adding men to the discussion was based on the WomenPreach! Ministry started by Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Associate Professor of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible, at Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO). In one of her seminars, men are included in the discussion because they requested to be in dialogue with the women. This

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<sup>4</sup> Betsy Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 223.

<sup>5</sup> Betsy Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 223.

model welcomes the male voice to the table so as to hear and learn about issues concerning women. The participants all agreed that this would be a great experience so the men were invited to the February 4, 2017 session. Due to this session's topic of discussion being on interpretation, the facilitator decided to use the text of Judges the nineteenth chapter, the Levite and the concubine, discussed at the January 2016 United Theological Seminary doctoral intensive. This particular text was taught at the plenary session led by Dr. Vivian Johnson, Professor of Old Testament at United Theological Seminary. This was an outstanding plenary and it was a great text to discuss with the male colleagues because of the drama in the text. Also, depending on who is interpreting the text, there may be controversy. Everyone came prepared to discuss Judges the nineteenth chapter because they were made aware in advance of the text that would be discussed. Discussions that were generated from this text during this session were as follows:

- Concubine - from care to property
- No voice of concubine in the text
- Sensitivity verses insensitivity of the Levite
- Seeing the bigger picture – what God was doing?
- When preaching text like these, there must be teaching to accompany the preaching because of silent sufferers in the congregation.
- How issues that arise are handled in the church
- Healthy perception of the church
- Church hurt
- Leadership issues

This was a great discussion and the added voices to the table were of benefit to both men and women because it allowed the participants to learn from one another through dialogue. There was also a desire to have future dialogue with the male colleagues.

The sixth session was held on February 11, 2017 and the topic was on introspection coming from the theoretical foundation chapter. The scheduled conversation was supposed to continue with the emphasis on the theological foundation chapter with the topic of discussion being on sermon preparation, but it changed to accompany the season that the participants were in. It appeared that participants were all going through something so the facilitator moved in that direction and lead the sermon preparation at the eighth and final session. Introspection is defined as “a reflective looking inward: an examination of one's own thoughts and feelings.”<sup>6</sup> There were many concerns during this session so each of the participants took an inward look at their present situation, as well as to how they were responding to what God is doing. Concerns ranged from ordination issues and the emotional capacity to continue with the process; being in a connectional system; itineracy and clergy appointments; church issues; and family issues. This session was not to fix anyone but allow this to be sacred space where venting could take place, if needed. The participants were in agreement that God was working, but the weightiness of ministry can be heavy at times. It was also agreed upon by the participants that this is a part of the process. However, what makes it a little easier, is the sharing that took place within the small intimate community that had been

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<sup>6</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “Introspection,” Merriam-Webster.com, accessed August 21, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/introspection>.

formulated as a result of this project. The encouragement and the spurring on is a big part of helping one to pursue and reach their next level of ministry.

The seventh session scheduled for February 25, 2017 was rescheduled for March 4, 2017, due to scheduling issues. At this session, the topic on introspection coming from the theoretical foundation chapter was continued. In addition to introspection, self-care and Sabbath rest were also discussed. The group shared regarding what they did for self-care. Responses ranged from massages, praying and meditation, vacations and getaways, and boundaries/limitations, to name a few. A participant made a statement that as a part of self-care, she wanted things, and in some ways, she feels selfish. Is it alright to feel this way? In the group there were married women, caregivers, pastors, mothers, full time, part time and bi-vocational pastors, and associate ministers. It was discussed how one had to fight to practice self-care in light of all of the responsibilities. When the subject of practicing Sabbath was approached, one had to fight in order to practice Sabbath. The participants agreed that self-care and the taking of Sabbath were necessary for the health of the individual and for the health of their ministry. The participants also agreed that, even though schedules were busy for ministers, one must be “intentional” about self-care and taking a Sabbath.

The last session held on March 11, 2017 resumed with the emphasis on the theological foundation chapter with the topic of sermon preparation. Back in February the following questions were sent out in advance so that they could be discussed during the sermon preparation session:

- How do you prepare your sermons?
- Are you a manuscript preacher?

- Do you preach from the lectionary or pay attention to the liturgical seasons?
- Who is your favorite male and female preacher and why?
- Do you listen to ROHO?
- Do you join Dr. Frank Thomas on Mondays on Periscope?
- What preaching resources do you have or are reading?
- Do you read sermons?
- Do you prefer to preach from OT or NT?
- What style of preaching: thematic, expository, four pages?

These questions were not for the purpose of collecting data as much as it was for generating conversation, noting similarities and differences from the group, and provoking thought among the participants. Also discussed among the group was the fact that some weeks are busier than others, so one is trying to find time for study and to be with God. The topic of preaching on stewardship was raised and how to have healthy messages regarding giving. A question was raised regarding whether anyone had a preaching coach. All of the participants agreed that a preaching coach is a good thing to enhance one's preaching skills but no one had one.

One of the main things to take from this session was that preachers, ministers, and or pastors are lifelong learners who will be continuously finding ways to perfect their craft. Participants were challenged to take advantage of opportunities to attend preaching seminars and conferences as a way of continuing education. This is in addition to reading material in the form of sermon preparation, the craft of preaching, reading sermons themselves, and even biographies of preachers. There is no one certain way to take part



in continuing education, but one is encouraged to incorporate a strategy that works for the individual.

### **Summary of Learning**

The first ten pre and post questions had to do with the focus area of spiritual discipline. In reviewing the charts, based on responses to true or false questions, there was no variation of the pre and post responses. The participants all felt that the spiritual disciplines made a difference in their devotional time, the disciplines allowed them to become more disciplined as it pertained to their ministry responsibilities, and it opened their eyes to experience God in new ways. However, although the pre and post test answers were the same, when it came to assessing whether the spiritual disciplines increased the participant's prayer life, six out of seven (or 86%) agreed that it had but one (or 14%) decided that it did not increase their prayer life. The participants selected from a list of twelve spiritual disciplines. The participants were asked which disciplines they practiced, pre and post question. There was a 14% increase (plus one), on the post test, of the following disciplines: meditation, prayer, solitude and service. There was also a 29% decrease (minus two) in the discipline of worship. When asked which disciplines were practiced most often, there was a 29% increase (plus two) in the area of meditation and service and a 14% increase (plus one) in the area of solitude. When asked which disciplines were practiced the least, there was a 14% increase (minus one, meaning more practiced this discipline) for the following disciplines: meditation, fasting, simplicity and solitude. There was a 14% decrease (plus one meaning that one less stopped practicing this discipline) of the following disciplines: confession, guidance, and celebration.

On the essay questions, when asked which did the participant enjoy the most, 71% chose study and 57% chose prayer, both pre and post responses. The rationale for prayer and study by the participants had to do spending time with God and their love for the word of God, preaching, teaching and practice. On another essay question participants were asked which discipline did they enjoy the least, the top two were fasting (29%) and simplicity (29%). The responses were the same on the pre and post test. The rationale for enjoying these disciplines the least had to do with the denial of self or self-gratification. These disciplines cause one to give up things that they like to do such as shop and eat, just to name a few. The final essay question relating to spiritual disciplines asked which discipline do they prefer not to practice. One of the top responses was simplicity (29%) because of the self-denial and the other response had to deal with being analytical with nothing being simple. Another top response (29%) thought that all of the disciples were good and felt that they were all worth trying.

The next ten questions (eleven through twenty) were on the topic of Sabbath. When asked whether the participants were intentional about taking a Sabbath, the charts show an increase by 29% (plus two) who are intentional about taking a Sabbath. Apparently, on the pre-test question, those who sometimes took a Sabbath (71%) was reduced on the post test to 43% (minus two). Those two participants on the post test are now intentional about taking a Sabbath. There was one participant who was not intentional about taking a Sabbath and they did not change. When asked if not taking a Sabbath did not affect one's week, there was a post- test increase of 14% (plus one) who felt their week was affected when they did not take a Sabbath. There was a decrease of 14% (minus one) who felt it was sometimes affected. When asked what day of the week

did the participants practice Sabbath there were a few adjustments. Monday through Thursday and Saturday, there were no changes noted on the charts. However, there was a small variation in looking at Friday and Sunday. On the post test, one participant took one half of their Sabbath on Friday and the other half on Sunday.

When looking at the true and false questions regarding the Sabbath, when asked whether the participants arranged their week so that they can take a Sabbath, there was a change of 14%, meaning one more person arranged their week to take a Sabbath. When asked whether the participants allowed other things to interrupt taking a Sabbath, initially 84% (six) allowed other things to interrupt taking a Sabbath and 14% (one) did not. On the post test, it changed to only 57% (four) allowing things to interrupt taking a Sabbath with the remaining 43% (three) did not. The remaining questions addressed the importance of Sabbath and both pre and post tests reflect 14% (one person) felt that taking a Sabbath was just not that important with the remaining 86% (six persons) taking the position that Sabbath was important to them. When asked if they were too busy to take a Sabbath and both pre and test questions reflect 24% (two persons) felt they were too busy to take a Sabbath and the remaining 76% (five persons) indicated they were not too busy to take a Sabbath. In looking at the responses to the essay questions, the pre and post test responses were the same. The participants agree that the Sabbath means to rest and it is a day to rest, be replenished and spiritually energized. Things that participants do on their Sabbath have to do with activities that help them to relax such as getting their hair and nails done and body massages. Other activities include spending time with family.

The final essay question regarding the topic of Sabbath asked about what season in their lives they find the hardest to take a Sabbath. Responses include Thanksgiving, Advent, Lent and Holy Week, vacation Bible school, and outside commitments such as social justice and Black Lives Matter. During the treatment session, when discussing the Sabbath in general, it was agreed that these activities and seasons in the life of the Church can affect whether a person will take a Sabbath that week. The consensus is that it is not an intentional interruption so that Sabbath cannot be taken, but it comes with the territory when one is doing ministry.

Questions twenty-one through thirty were on the topic of spiritual goals. When asked if the participants understood the importance of setting spiritual goals, on the pre-test 57% understood. The remaining 43% felt that the spiritual goals were somewhat important. However, on the post-test it changed to all participants understanding the importance of setting spiritual goals. When asked if participants reviewed the spiritual goals to determine if they are being accomplished, on the post test there was no increase for those you answered “yes.” There was an increase by 14% (plus one) for those who now review the spiritual goals sometimes. Once spiritual goals are accomplished, those who revise or set new goals also increased by 14% (plus one).

On the true and false questions, the pre and post responses were the same. On the essay questions, the participants were asked what were their spiritual goals. Most goals included practicing more of the spiritual disciplines as they continued to cultivate their own personal relationship with God as well as practice disciplines to carry out their ministry assignments. Spiritual goals also included starting new ministries as a way to help others in ministry and a focus on continuing education through self-study,

conferences, and workshops. Post responses to the essay questions did not change but 57% (plus four) added to their original response with spiritual goals such as intentional study, time management, and getting back into communion with God. When asked the role the spirituals goals played in their present ministry, there were no changes on post responses. In the essay question that addressed the benefits of setting spiritual goals, the participants did not change their pre-test responses. However, 57% (plus four) added or clarified their post essay responses to include keeping focused; making better use of time and being intentional about keeping the Sabbath; focus on continued growth and development and motivation to pursue the next level of ministry.

The next ten questions (thirty-one through forty) were focused on spiritual gifts. When asked the last time the participants had taken a spiritual gifts assessment, there were no changes on the post responses. Of the participants, 28.5% had taken one in the last zero to two years; 28.5% had taken one in the last three to five years; and 43% had taken one in the last five plus years. All of the participants agreed and understood the outcome of the assessment and there were no changes in the responses on pre and post questions. All of the participants had taken more than one spiritual gift assessment and all were interested in the understanding or pursuing the relevance, so there were no changes in their responses. However, for those who had taken more than one spiritual gifts assessment and had different responses, on post-test, 86% (plus one) felt the results were accurate and 14% (minus one) felt they were inaccurate. The same percentage applied to the question asking the participants if they believed the longer they were in ministry, spiritual gifts may change. On the essay questions where the participants were asked about their primary spiritual gifts and what gifts were not being used in their

ministry setting, there were no changes reflected on post response. They have the same spiritual gifts and the participants are using their spiritual gifts in their ministry settings.

The next ten questions (forty-one through fifty) were on the topic of introspection/self-care. When asked how often participants took a vacation, 71% take a vacation every year and 29% take a vacation every two to three years, reflecting the same response on pre and post questions. The next questions asked if participants seriously reflected on their personal needs. On the post response there was an increase in the “yes” response by 14% (plus one); there was a decrease of 28% (minus two) in the “no” response; and there was an increase in the “sometimes” response by 14% (plus one). When asked how many participated in self-care, on the post response, there was an increase to the “yes” response by 28% (plus two) and a decrease in the “sometimes” response by 28% (minus two). On the true or false questions, there was only one variation in response on pre and post question and this pertained to the question regarding whether the participants had a hobby. On the pre-test, it reflects that one person had a hobby but it was later determined that it was still ministry related. In light of same, the post test reflects no participant has a hobby.

On the essay questions, it asked if one could reflect on their own needs, what was lacking. There was a variation of responses on the pre-essay responses. It ranged from vacation, quiet time, discipline, rest, vacation, solitude, personal time, and more self-confidence. The post responses included intentional self-time, solitude, health boundaries, intentional about self-care, more confidence, and quite time. There were 57% (four) of the participants who altered their post responses to this question. The next essay question asked where the participants went to be restored when the weight of

ministry gets too heavy. Responses include: mentor or other colleagues, therapist, pray and press, home church to call on intercessor, and to the park and isolate with God. On the post essay response, only one participant (14%) included family. It is also safe to note that of the seven participants, only one person has a therapist. All of the participants relied heavily on colleagues when the burden of ministry gets heavy. When asked about how the participants felt about the role of self-care among the clergy, the responses included vital for longevity, important, necessary and needed. On the post response, 43% (three) of the participants expounded by including the fact that clergy pour out having nothing left causing them to operate on fumes, which results in ineffectiveness. Other post responses include, self-care is seriously lacking among clergy because we are so busy and self-care is much needed but greatly neglected because of the many roles we play.

The next ten questions (fifty-one through sixty) relate to the topic of sermon preparation. The question pertaining to hours spent on preparing a sermon, the post response reflects a 14% decrease (minus one) for participants who spent five to ten hours preparing sermons and a 14% increase (plus one) who spent ten plus hours preparing sermons. There were no participants, pre or post test, that spent one to five hours preparing sermons. The best time of day or night to prepare sermons, pre or post responses, did not change. It appears that participants prepared sermons at time that they can be most effective and that it works within their schedules. As it pertains to rehearsing and internalizing sermons, there was a small variation in the post test results. The “yes” response did not change, but the “no” response decreased by 14% (minus one) and the “sometimes” response increased by 14% (plus one).

On the true or false questions, the only change in pre and post test response is the true or false question relating to sermon helps. Post “true” response shows a decrease of 14% (minus one) and the false response increased by 14% (plus one). Apparently, with the post-test responses, none of the participants sought sermon help when preparing sermons. On the essay questions, it asked the participant’s weak areas when preparing sermons. Responses included introductions (28.66%), closings (28.66%), time to internalize (28.7%), and one (14%) stated that the whole process is a weakness because she is not a pastor nor does she preach on a regular basis. There were no changes on pre and post test responses. When asked what resources the participants used as a part of the sermon preparation process, both pre and post responses include Bibles of various versions, commentaries, books, Bible dictionaries, and computer programs such as Logos, Bibleworks and Ministry Matters. Other resources include hymnals, movies, songs, newspapers and life situations. The last question for this sermon preparation topic had to do with what preachers and scholars did the participants admire and why. The responses reflect scholarly and trained people, past and present. The rationale for selecting these preachers and scholars given by the participants was that they were theologically sound, the sermons were well prepared and delivered, and they admired their overall preaching style (storytellers, prophetic). This response is based on personal preference but the responses do reflect the participants admired preachers and scholars who take their ministry assignment serious.

The final questions (sixty-one through seventy) relate to the topic of biblical interpretation. The first two multiple choice questions had to do with the interpretive methods (historical critical and reader response). The pre and post responses did not



change on either question. As for the role that the community plays in the biblical interpretive process, the responses did not change on the post test. On the true or false responses, all participants felt that the proper interpretation of the text was important to them; all agreed that they were aware when text were exegeted incorrectly; and all agreed that text are being interpreted to justify one's own personal beliefs. There was no variation in the pre and post test responses. However, there was some variation on the question that asked about taking a hermeneutic course in seminary that helps with interpretation.

On the post response, there was a 14% (plus one) increase on the true response and 14% (minus one) on the false response, reflecting one participant now feels that the hermeneutic course helps with interpretation. On the essay questions, when asked to describe the womanist view of interpreting text, there were a variation of responses but somewhat related. Responses include seeing the text from a black woman's perspective, adding the voice of the black woman and allowing her to be a part of the interpretive community, and bringing the unique experience of life and relationship with God. These responses are both pre and post responses. However, there was one pre-response that felt that the womanist view, although important, was sometimes too much. The post response (representing 14%) added that the womanist view is important that her voice be added to the community because it raises awareness that there are other voices that are relevant to this process. However, there are still times that it can be over the top.

The next essay question goes a little further by asking whether they believe gender plays a role in how a person interprets biblical texts. The consensus was that men and women are different which makes both voices necessary in the interpretive process.

One participant went further by adding that what may be alright for a man maybe an insult for a woman in biblical text. There is a sensitivity that is required when reading and studying biblical text that the participants feel men may lack. The post response shows one participant (representing 14%) who add to her response that culture, race, age and life experience plays a part. She also felt that privilege frames one's hermeneutic.

The final essay question was more personal and asked what biblical text did the participants find hard to interpret and why. Of the participants, 43% felt that the book of Revelations was hard to interpret because of its metaphors and symbolism relating to eschatological times. Another 28.5% considered Ezekiel somewhat hard to interpret because of its imagery and visions. The remaining 28.5% felt that books like Isaiah and Song of Songs were hard to interpret because it either contained or was considered poetry.

On the final interview, the participants were asked questions about their personal experience of being involved in this project. There were five questions with two to four parts to each question. An analysis was conducted on each question. The first interview question asked about the overall project. Everyone was pleased with being a part of this project and felt that it made a difference in embracing their passion and pursuing their next level of ministry. These sessions helped the participants to recognize possibilities, provide encouragement where there was discouragement, release one from being stagnant, and provide clarity. The information used from the foundation chapters, as well as the topics discussed during the sessions, were relevant to women in ministry. The information and discussions were motivating factors that allowed one to continue to reflect and discern as they move forward in ministry. Where there was stagnancy,

relevant information was shared that allowed one's pursuit of ministry to be more fluid.

It was determined that it was not only the shared information and discussions, it was also the coming together, the shared space or dedicated time, that was relevant and motivating.

The participants really appreciated the shared space or sacred space where both giving and receiving took place. When asked about the best part of the sessions, 57% or four participants felt it was the time when the male colleagues were invited into the interpretation session. The discussion centered around a text where there was drama and controversy, making it a good text to hear both male and female views. The participants felt that this was an excellent session and wanted to do this periodically in the future. Two of the participants, or 29%, considered the best part of the sessions to center around all of the topics and foundational chapters. One of the participants, or 14%, favored the session regarding the historical foundation because it was encouraging to see how women sacrificed to do what God had called them to do.

The second interview question had to do with the small group or shared sacred space community. The participants felt that they had the freedom to be honest and transparent within the group. In light of the participants knowing one another, especially from seminary, this was a good dynamic. Participants felt this community allowed one to be honest and vulnerable because of shared interest as women in ministry. The participants were also seen as persons of integrity which made it easier to share within the group. This space was liberating and the participants felt comfortable in sharing their concerns. Within this community, it was also determined that this group was a motivating factor to help the participants to pursue their passion. This small group

provided an atmosphere where women in ministry, with shared interests, could be in dialogue and provide a source of encouragement for one another. It not only gave the participants motivation, but it also challenged them in the pursuit of their passion.

According to the participants, this shared space also provided a community of support without judgment. There were times of disagreement due to various views as well as shared personal information, but there was no judgment among the participants. The space was also used as a sounding board to share dreams and vision; no matter how unconventional or outlandish, support was given without judgment.

The third question dealt with the performance of the facilitator when it came to addressing subjects that were controversial but relevant to women in ministry as well as the transparency of the facilitator. According to the participants, the facilitator did a good job at guiding the discussion in the right direction. It was decided that the facilitator was doing the work that she was called to do, making her the right person to facilitate the discussions. There was a willingness to address controversial matters in spite of denomination, life experience or theological difference. The atmosphere was set by the facilitator where participants could freely share different views. The facilitator was transparent in sharing her ministry and life experience, which allowed for further transparency among the group, making the sessions that much richer.

The fourth question was regarding the impact the project had on the participants. According to the participants, this project helped in the discernment process of the next level of ministry. It has also challenged participants in the area of self-care. The project empowered the participants for their next level of ministry including a call to empower other women in ministry. The question was raised what impact this project would have if

it was continued (in this context) or was implemented elsewhere. All of the participants thought it would be beneficial if the project was continued in this area and have a positive impact if implemented elsewhere. One participant felt that it was not just unique to this context but should consider reaching out to other women in ministry in the form of a conference. When asked specifically, as a result of this model of ministry, is there a greater motivation to pursue their passion and how relevant was this project in the pursuit of the next level of ministry? There is a greater motivation to pursue one's passion by all of the participants for what they experienced during all of the sessions; topic, discussion and community.

The project was relevant to the participants to pursue their next level of ministry for different reasons. One participant felt that she was not sure she would be as confident or driven to do the next thing if she had not taken part in this experience. Another felt this project was relevant because it allowed her time to sit and ponder the next move of ministry among a community of women who had shared interests. Other participants felt this project was relevant because it at least started the discernment process as they consider their next step.

The fifth question asked what the participants would recommend if this project was to continue. Every participant agreed that the project should continue because it was beneficial to them and would be beneficial to others. When asked about the frequency of the meetings, there was one who wanted to continue to meet on regular basis, one person recommended that the meetings occur on a bi-monthly basis, and the remaining persons (five) recommended on a periodic basis due to scheduling and prior commitments. When asked for ways the eight weeks sessions could have been better responses included that a

book study could have been done, discussion questions could have been given to the participants in advance, and that sessions were fine as they were. The final questions asked what could be improved going forward and they are as follows: smaller is better, so keep it small; do a needs assessment and see what is needed and move in that direction; sessions could have been structured to stay on schedule; maybe open up the sessions to women who have not been to seminary so that they can be engaged and prayerfully inspire some to go to seminary; do more collaborations with the male counterparts; meet more regularly and shorten the time block; consider alternating the meeting day or time.

This project was formulated to contribute towards continued growth and development by creating space for challenge, intentional discernment, empowerment, encouragement and vision. The participants learned several things from this project. One was the information in the foundational chapters. The biblical foundation provided an in-depth study of how God used Deborah, prophet and judge (Judges 4:1-16) and Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38), in a mighty way. This study was a source of encouragement and empowerment as God leads and uses God's people. The historical foundation chapter introduced, and reintroduced to some, the women who fought to serve and be used by God and paved the way for women in ministry. This was truly a source of encouragement as historical figures were discussed. The theological foundation chapter was based on womanist theology, a liberation theology which values the voice and the work of African American women, and seeks to make a difference in black lives. This session enlightened and reminded the group that they are a part of the interpretive community and their voice has value and power. This voice empowers and breaks down

oppressive forces that hinders liberation. The theoretical foundation looked at similar models of ministry but it also looked at models from the discipline of psychology. Through this session, the participants were able to see the need for self-care as well as clergy peer groups or other means of support.

The pre and post test results varied in the different areas. In these areas (spiritual discipline, Sabbath, spiritual goals, spiritual gifts, introspection/self-care, sermon preparation and biblical interpretation), participants were enlightened, challenged, made aware, and gained clarity regarding things that are important in ministry. In the area of spiritual discipline, it raised the awareness for the need and value of the disciplines. Although the participants were not strangers to this topic, it challenged them to be intentional about practicing the disciplines. It was agreed by the participants that the practice of spiritual disciplines will enhance their own personal spiritual growth and development as well as to their leadership as ministers. In the area of Sabbath, although all participants saw it as a day of rest, the appreciation and importance of taking a Sabbath was increased. Note on the pre and post test, one participant answered that taking a Sabbath is just not that important to her still engaged in activities that would be considered Sabbath activities.

In the area of spiritual goals, participants learned the benefit of setting spiritual goals, in addition to revisiting and revising the goals once they are accomplished. In the area of spiritual gifts, it was determined that spiritual gifts can change or increase over the life of your ministry as one continues to grow. During the session, there was time to discuss this at greater length measuring from the first acknowledgement of spiritual gifts to the present. In the area of introspection/self-care, this generated a lot of soul searching

within the participants. Participants agreed that this is the one area that is lacking both in the participants as well as in clergy overall. As a result of this discussion, it caused some deep thought and even provoked action within the group. One participant answered in the pre-test that she does not seriously reflect on her own personal needs and only practices self-care sometimes. On the post-test, she now seriously reflects on her personal needs and practices self-care on a regular. She stated in the essay question that she has now set healthy boundaries, she is intentional about self-care and is more confident. All participants were challenged in some way but to different degrees, but all were in agreement that self-care is vital if one is to be successful in ministry.

In the area of sermon preparation, there was more of a time of sharing about each person's routine, resources used, and scholars and preachers they admired. What can be taken from the area of sermon preparation is that the fact preachers are lifelong learners and continuing education is necessary. In the final area of biblical interpretation, it was agreed that the voice of the female is important to the interpretative community. What was learned or given greater consideration was how valuable the female voice is to the interpretive process, especially when looking at biblical text surrounding women with low status. The participants learned the value of the voice.

This project, "Motivating Trained Women to Embrace Their Passion," was successful and the hypothesis supported. This project was created to contribute towards continued growth and development by creating space for seminary trained women where they could be challenged, empowered, encouraged, and allowed space for discernment and vision. Evidence of this can be witnessed in the summary of learning including the data collected and the outcome of the treatment sessions surrounding the foundation



chapters as well as the focus areas. Participants were challenged in all areas of their ministry, causing one to look internally and externally. It challenged participants to see if there was anything lacking within their own lives because this has an effect on ministry.

Pursing one's passion can be ineffective when there is a lot of unrecognized or denied brokenness in one's life. The discussion on introspection/self-care was vital because it helped to identify these issues. Also, discussed within a community among peers made it even powerful because of the support and the encouragement that was received among the sacred community. Participants were also empowered by the foundation chapters because they were able to witness women (biblical characters, historical figures, womanist theologians, and scholars) doing mighty and miraculous works. This can be seen in the lives of the biblical characters, Deborah and Mary, being used of God, the way that God has chosen. Empowerment can come of the historical figures who fought for space to preach the word of God, where there was no space. Empowerment can come from womanist theologians who are determined to have a voice at the table and fight for others. It can also come from other scholars who have invested in the lives of other women in ministry who have a similar model to this project.

Discernment and vision were another key part of this project. This was reason the spiritual goals was made a part of this study. Participants started envisioning and discerning where God was leading them next. Also, it brought them back to the spiritual disciplines because it requires much prayer, study, meditation and even solitude, for some, as a part of this process. The pursuit of embracing one's passion calls for preparedness. One participant is now working on her doctor of ministry degree and one participant is heavy into justice and plans to pursue her Ph.D. in the very near future.

Two other participants will also be pursuing a doctor of ministry within the next couple of years. The remaining two participants are still discerning their next move in ministry. I represent the facilitator, also a part of the group, and I seek to start other groups and write books.

### **Conclusion**

The project went very well and I have a passion to encourage others in ministry, so creating this project was inevitable. I knew that it would have an impact on the participants but I had no idea to what degree. Something simple as creating sacred space for women in ministry has made an enormous difference in their lives. This project has created space where women in ministry can be open, honest and vulnerable without judgment as they work through their own issues while pursuing their next level of ministry. I did not realize that women in ministry valued my leadership or even viewed me as a leader for women in ministry. This is something that I will have to ponder further as I continue to pursue my own passion.

I learned that everything that I learn is not only to help me, but to also help someone else. Doing research and writing the foundational chapters were a life changing experience. The research itself allowed me to read works of numerous scholars. It also allowed me to compare the work of scholars with differing views which challenged me to increase my range whether researching or reading for my own personal edification. I love exegetical work so I thoroughly enjoyed doing the biblical foundation chapter. In doing research, it opened my eyes to things that I have never seen before for both the Old and New Testament paradigm. It allowed me to learn at a deeper level as it challenged

my own thought process. The historical foundation chapter allowed me to look closer at the trailblazers who laid the foundation for women in ministry today. From the historical chapter, I learned about their lives and the tremendous sacrifice that was made in order to do what God had called these women to do. The theological chapter introduced me to other liberation theologians who paved the way for me to have a voice at the table. It also taught me that I not only sit at the table representing myself, but for the whole community and for those to come. I learned that my voice is valuable. In the theoretical chapter, I learned about other models of ministry that reach out to women in ministry to empower, educate and encourage along the way. I also learned about another discipline that seeks, in some way, to do what this project is doing. The knowledge that was gained in researching and preparing the foundation chapters are life changing and sets the tone for future works.

This project is valuable and I would like to continue bi-monthly meetings with this group of women, and periodically include the male colleagues when discussion centers around biblical interpretation. This was truly a good session that all participants enjoyed and we can all definitely learn from one another as well as respect each other's views. Another future work includes each woman partnering with a woman in ministry who needs help in ministry, just starting out in ministry, or who just desires to learn. I have also considered starting another group of younger women in ministry. I feel that the future work will continue to motivate women in ministry to embrace their passion. Another future work may include a workshop or a conference that will empower women. I am even considering blogging as a way of encouraging others in ministry.

I would also like to write a couple of books to enlighten, empower and encourage

women and men in ministry. The books will be based on the Old and New Testament paradigm of Deborah, prophet and judge, and Mary the mother of Jesus. In whatever format or even venue, there is room for future work to help others to embrace and pursuit their passion.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PRE AND POST QUESTIONS**

## Pre and Post Questions

### Spiritual Disciplines

1. Which of the following spiritual disciplines do you practice?

___ meditation	___ simplicity	___ confession
___ prayer	___ solitude	___ guidance
___ fasting	___ submission	___ celebration
___ study	___ service	___ worship

2. Which do you practice most often?

___ meditation	___ simplicity	___ confession
___ prayer	___ solitude	___ guidance
___ fasting	___ submission	___ celebration
___ study	___ service	___ worship

3. Which do you practice the least?

___ meditation	___ simplicity	___ confession
___ prayer	___ solitude	___ guidance
___ fasting	___ submission	___ celebration
___ study	___ service	___ worship

4. Practicing the spiritual disciplines has made a difference in my devotional time? True or False

5. Practicing the spiritual disciplines has allowed me to become more disciplined in performing my ministry responsibilities? True or False

6. Practicing the disciplines has increased my prayer life? True or False

7. Practicing the disciplines has opened my eyes to experience God in new ways? True or False

8. Which did you enjoy the most and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Which discipline did you enjoy the least and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Which discipline do you prefer NOT to practice and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Sabbath**

11. I am intentional about taking a Sabbath?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

12. When I do not take a Sabbath, it does NOT affect my week?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

13. Which day of the week do you practice Sabbath?

\_\_\_M \_\_\_T \_\_\_W \_\_\_Th \_\_\_F \_\_\_Sa \_\_\_Su \_\_\_None

14. I arrange my week so that I will be able to take a Sabbath. True or False

15. I allow other things to interrupt taking a Sabbath. True or False

16. Taking a Sabbath is just NOT that important to me. True or False

17. I am just too busy to take a Sabbath. True or False

18. What is your definition of Sabbath? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. When you do practice your Sabbath, what are some of the things that you do?

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20. During what season in your life do you find it the hardest to take a Sabbath?

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**Spiritual goals**

21. I understand the importance of setting spiritual goals.

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. somewhat

22. If you do have spiritual goals, do you review them to see if they are being accomplished?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

23. Once spiritual goals are accomplished; do you revise or set new goals?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

24. I do not feel that spiritual goals are necessary. True or False

25. I am still discerning what my spiritual goals are. True or False

26. I have never thought about setting spiritual goals. True or False

27. I have given it much thought but have not set any actual goals. True or False

28. What are your spiritual goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What role has your spiritual goals played in your present ministry position? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. What are the benefits of setting spiritual goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Spiritual gifts**

31. When was the last time you have taken a spiritual gifts assessment?
- A. 0-2 years
  - B. 3-5 years
  - C. 5+ years
32. Did you agree with the assessment?
- A. yes
  - B. no
  - C. somewhat
33. Do you have an understanding of the outcome of the assessment?
- A. yes
  - B. no
  - C. somewhat
34. I have taken more than one spiritual gifts assessment. True or False
35. If you have taken more than one spiritual gifts assessment and the results were different, do you feel the results were accurate? True or False
36. I believe the longer I am in ministry, my spiritual gifts may change? True or False
37. I am not that interested in understanding or pursuing the relevance of my spiritual gifts? True or False
38. What are your primary spiritual gifts? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
39. What spiritual gifts are you presenting using in your area of ministry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
40. What spiritual gifts do you have but are not using to date in your ministry setting?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Introspection/self-care**

41. How often do you go on vacation?

- A. every 6 months
- B. every year
- C. every 2-3 years
- D. I never had a vacation

42. Do you ever seriously reflect about your own personal needs?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

43. Do you practice self-care?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

44. I have a hobby? True or False

45. I am involved in organizations outside of church or ministry. True or False

46. Doing ministry sometimes causes me anxiety. True or False

47. When I get too stressed out, I seek professional help? True or False

48. If you could reflect on your own needs, what do you feel you are lacking?

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49. When the weight of ministry gets too heavy and burdens you down, where do you go or what do you do to be restored?

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50. Describe how you personally feel about the role of self-care among clergy?

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**Sermon preparation**

51. How many hours do you spend preparing a sermon?

- A. 1-5 hours
- B. 5-10 hours
- C. 10+ hours

52. What is the best time of the day or night to prepare sermons?

- A. early morning (starting around 4 am)
- B. morning (around 8 am)
- C. midday (noon)
- D. evening (around 6 pm)
- E. night (around 9 pm)

53. After preparing my sermon, I have time to rehearse and internalize the sermon?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

54. In my preparation process, I often refer to sermon helps (sermonwriter.com, sermoncentral.com). True or False

55. As a part of my continuing education, I read or listen to other sermons. True or False

56. I read resources about sermon preparation. True or False

57. I have considered a preaching coach to enhance my preaching. True or False

58. When preparing sermons, what are some of your weak areas?

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59. As a part of your sermon preparation process, what resources do you consult?

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60. What scholars or preachers do you admire and why?

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**Biblical interpretation**

61. Do you make it a practice to interpret the biblical text by using the historical critical method?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

62. Do you make is a practice to interpret the biblical text by using the reader response method?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

63. Do you believe the community plays a role in interpreting the biblical text?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. sometimes

64. The proper interpretation of the biblical text is important to me. True or False

65. I took a hermeneutics course in seminary which helps me with biblical interpretation. True or False

66. I am aware when a text is misinterpreted or exegete incorrectly. True or False

67. I believe text are still being interpreted to justify one's own personal beliefs. True or False

68. How do you describe the womanist view of interpreting text?

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69. Do you believe gender plays a role in how a person interprets biblical text? If so, why?

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70. What are some of the biblical texts that you find hard to interpret and why?

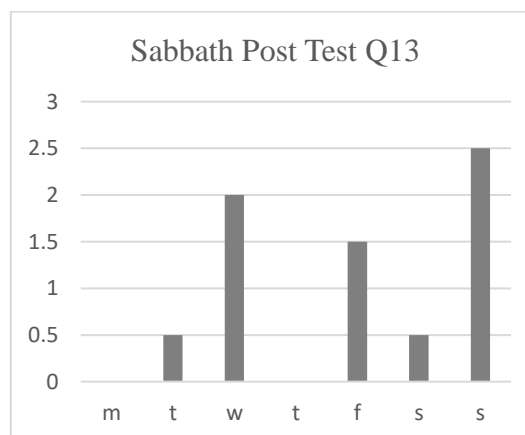
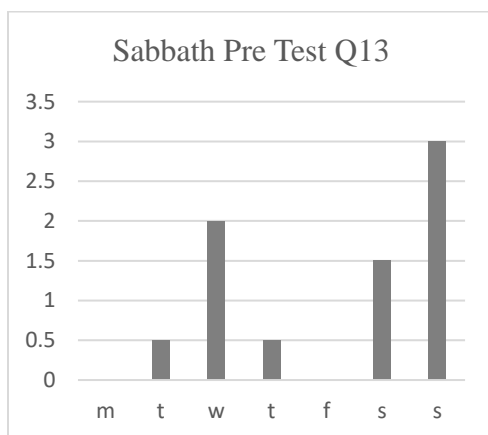
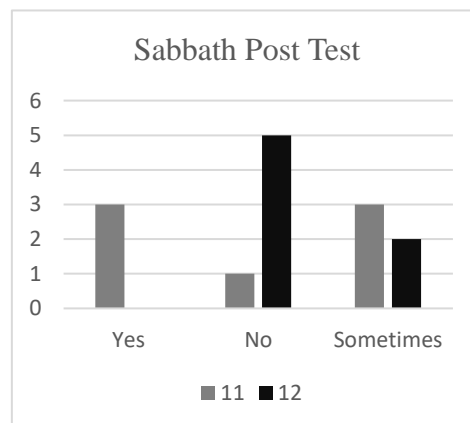
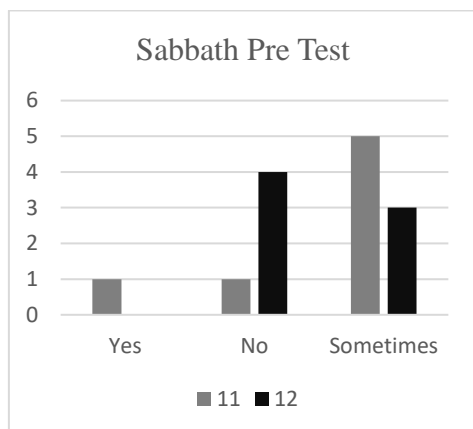
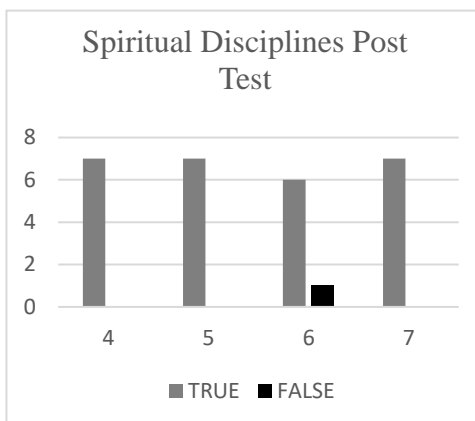
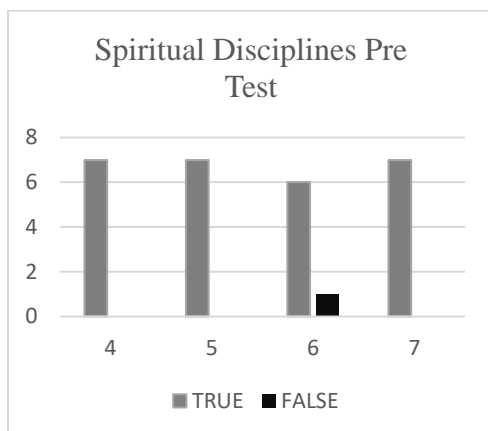
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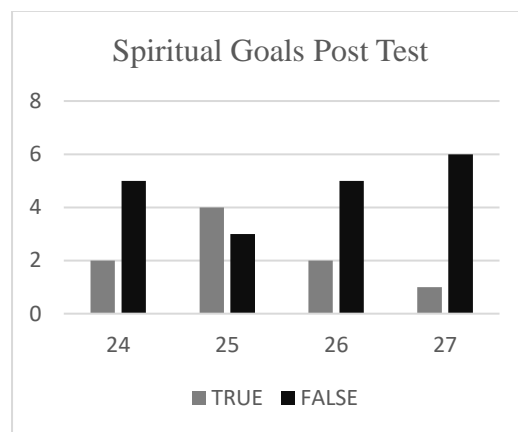
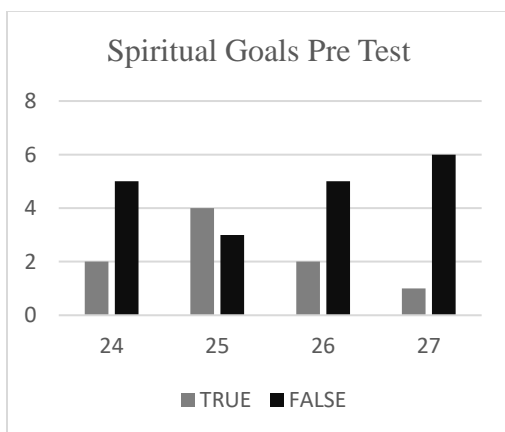
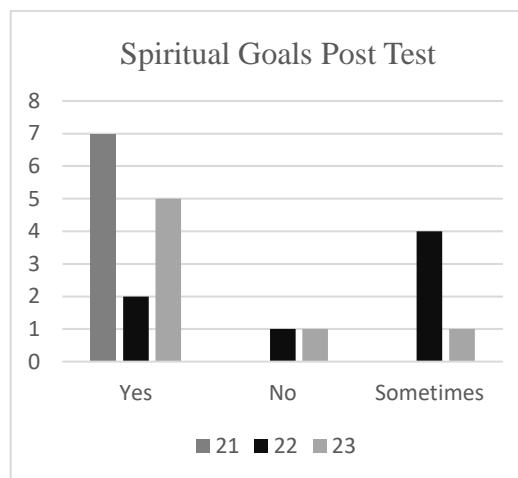
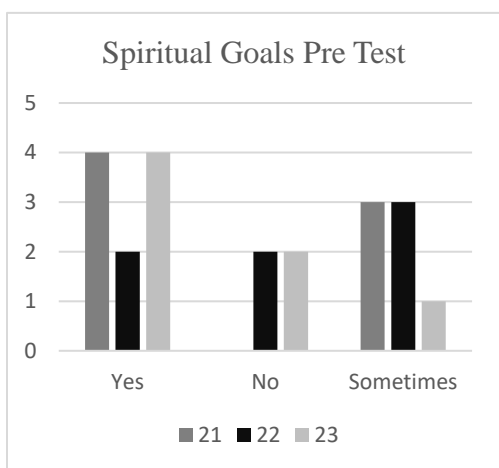
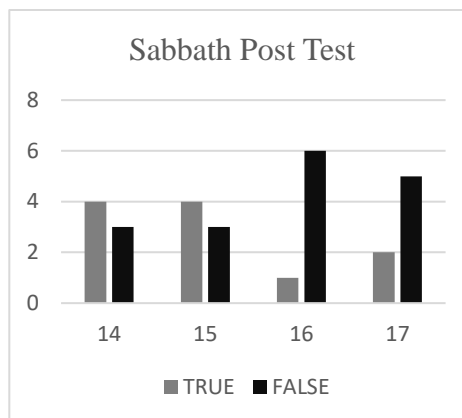
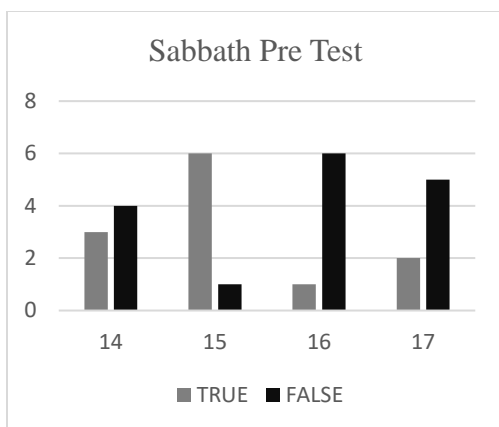
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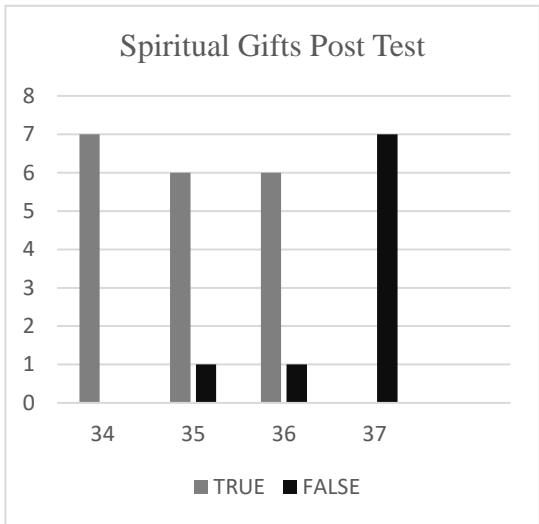
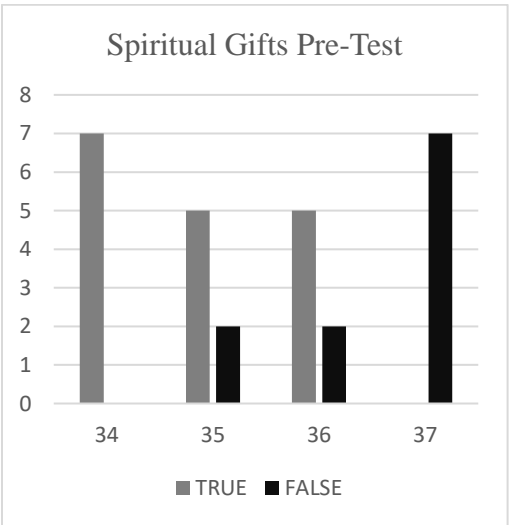
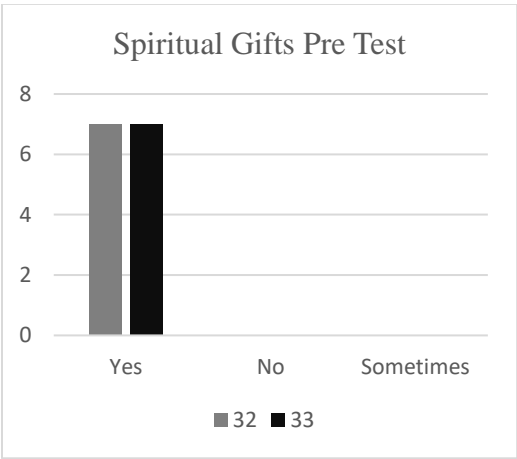
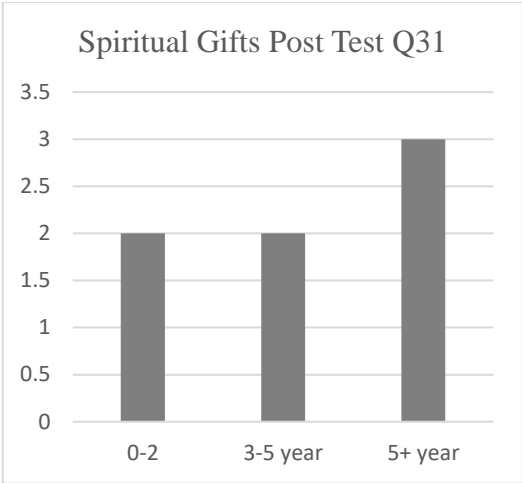
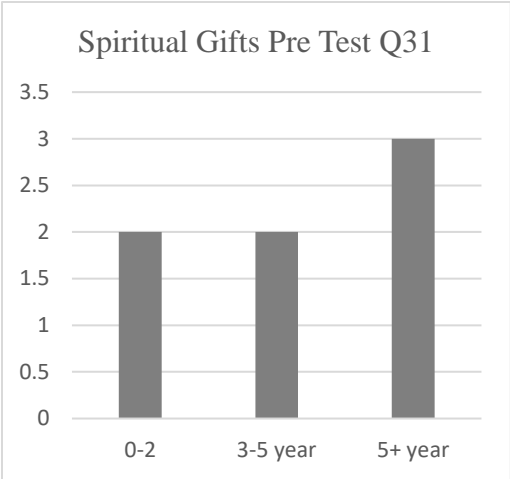
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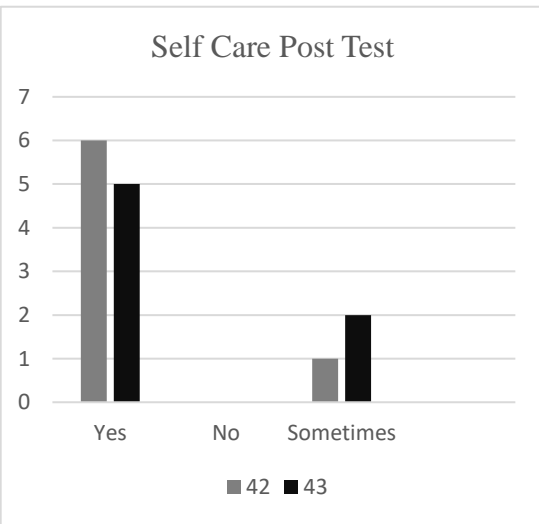
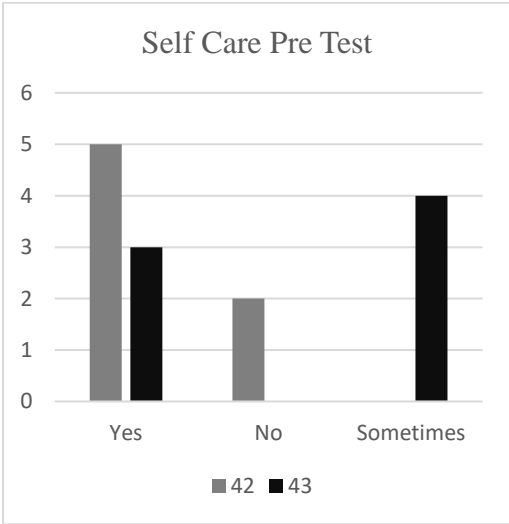
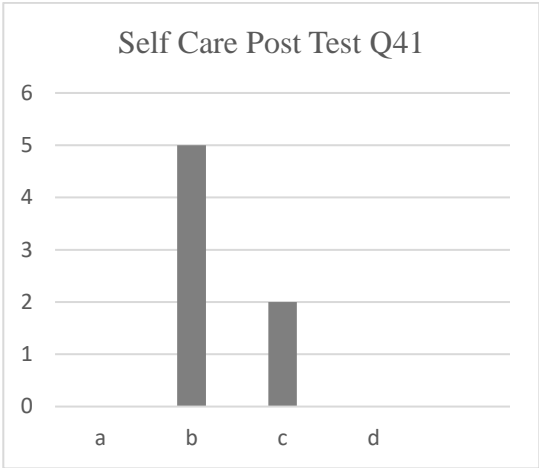
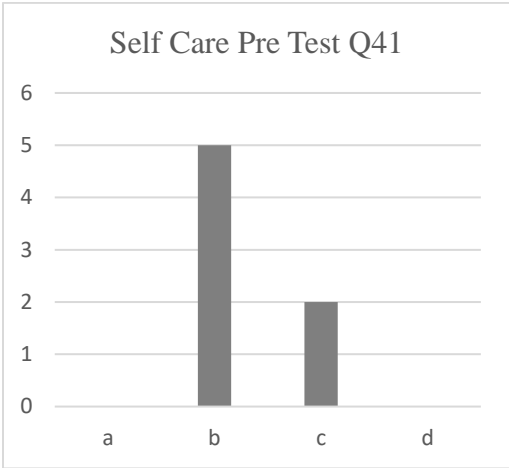
**APPENDIX B**  
**PROJECT ANALYSIS CHARTS**

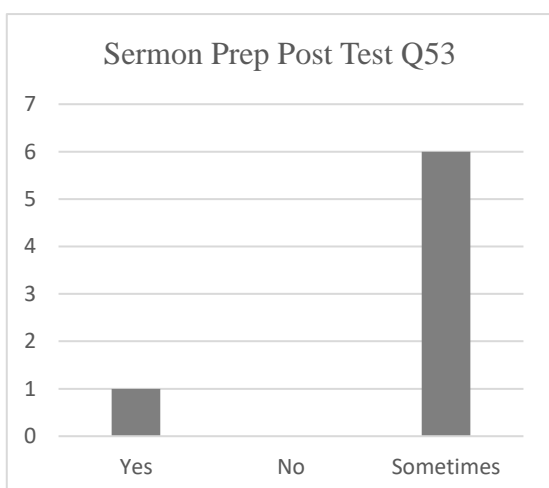
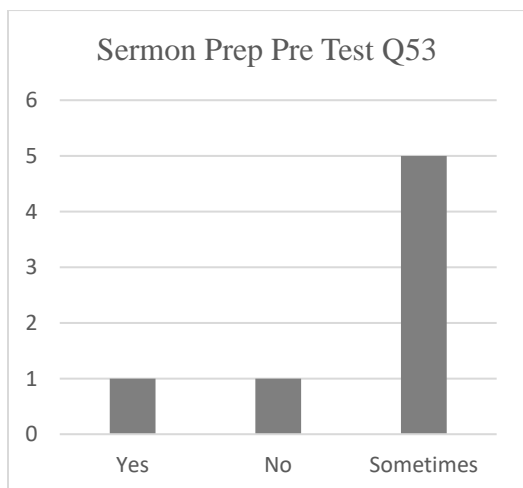
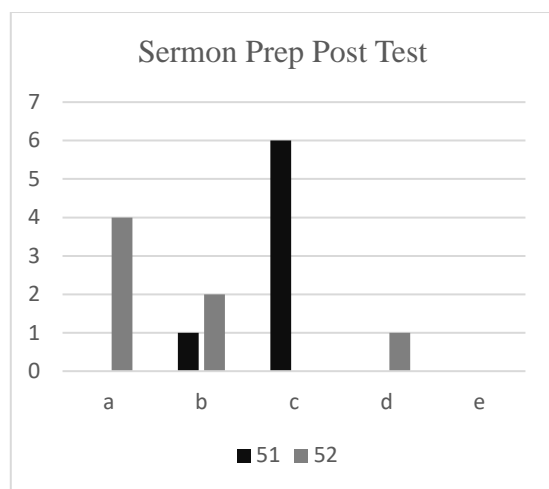
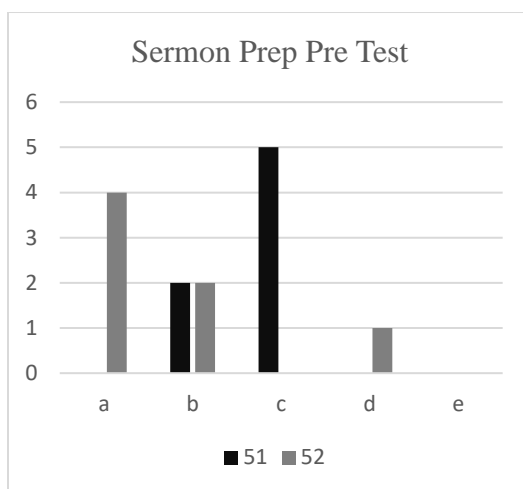
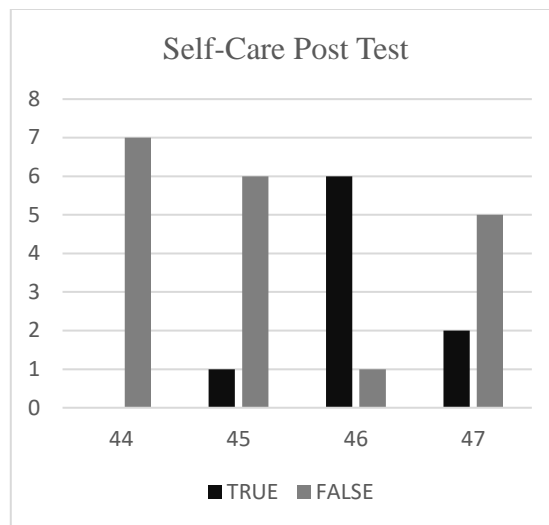
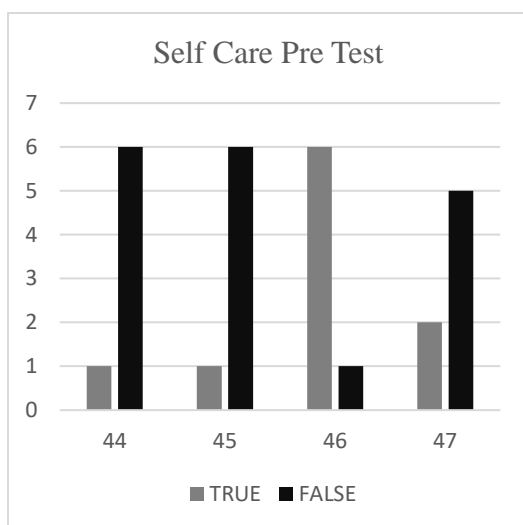


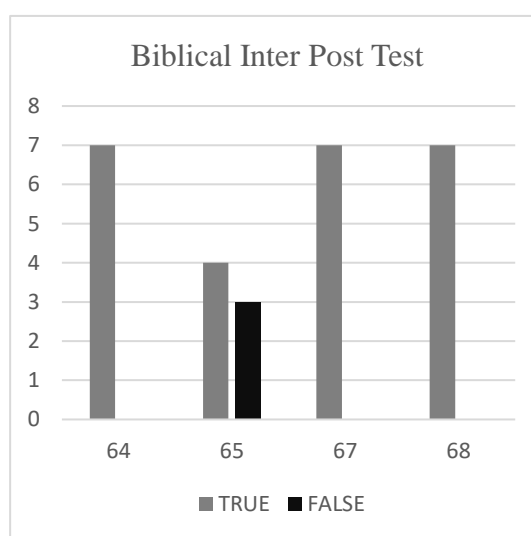
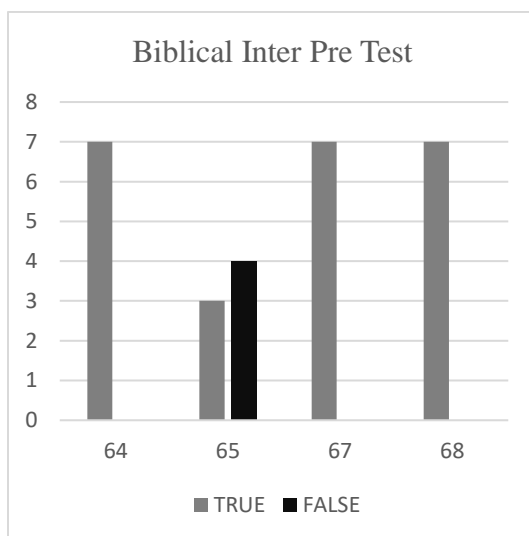
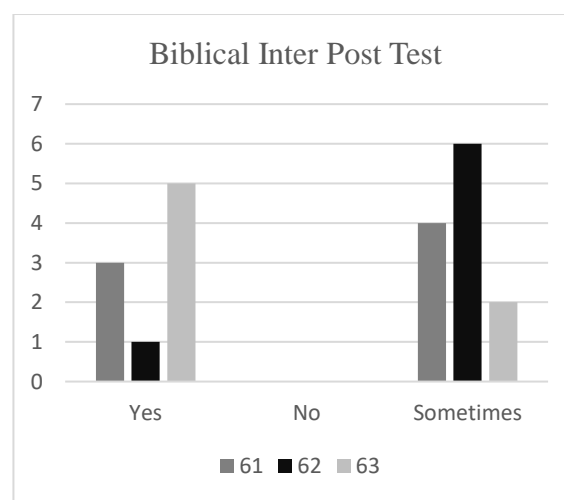
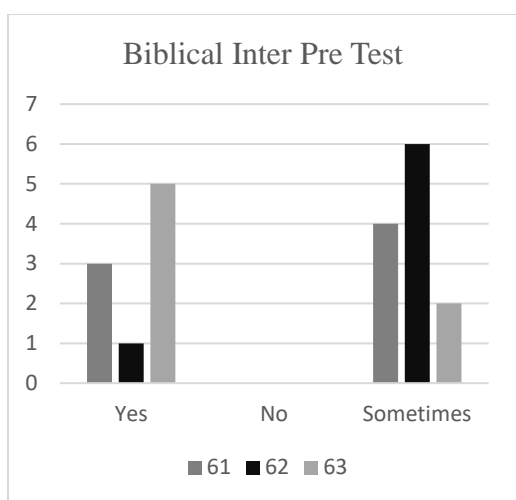
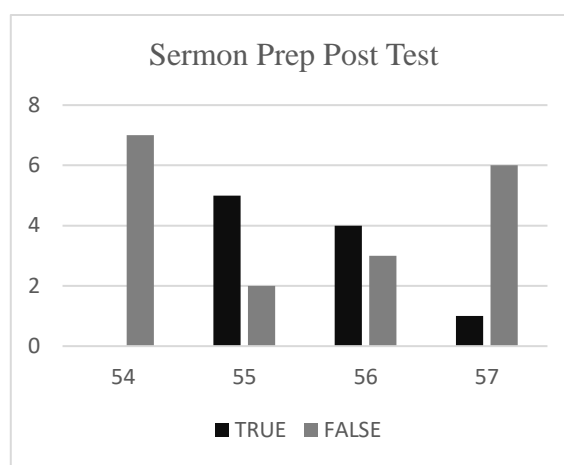
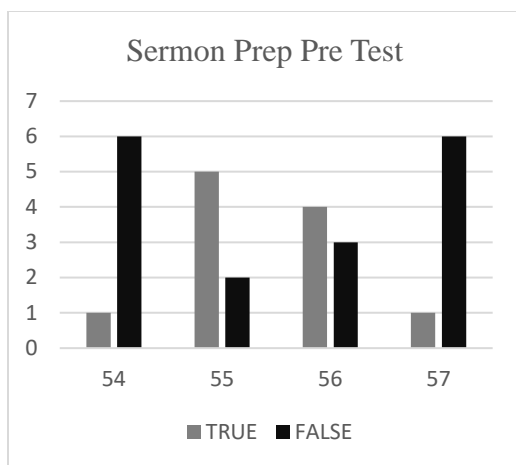












**APPENDIX C**  
**FINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

## Final Interview Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you feel about the project that has taken place over the course of these eight sessions?

- Do you believe that these eight sessions have helped you to see the relevance of embracing your passion and pursuing the next level of ministry? How so?
- Do you believe that during the past eight week sessions you've discussed relevant issues? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that the activities of these eight week sessions have helped you? Why or why not?
- What was the best part of the sessions?

2. How would you describe the shared sacred space community?

- Did you feel like you found a community that has become sacred space with people whom you could be honest and share your concerns as well as your vision? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that you are in a group that can help motivate you to pursue the next level of ministry? Why or why not?
- Did you believe that the shared sacred space community was supportive or did you feel like you were being judged? Why or why not?

3. What feedback would you provide about how the facilitator of the group did?

- Do you believe the facilitator was willing to address subjects that were controversial but yet relevant to women in ministry?
- If so, do you believe the facilitator was transparent in honestly dealing with matters pertaining to women in ministry and women who are pursuing ministry? Why or why not?

4. What impact has this project had on you?

- What impact do you foresee in trained women in ministry if this type of project continued here or was implemented elsewhere?
- As the result of this model do you believe that you have a greater motivation to pursue your passion? Why or why not?
- Describe how relevant this project was for you as you pursue your next level of ministry?

5. Would you recommend that this ministry continue? Why or why not?

- If so, would you want to continue attending on a regular or a periodic basis?
- In what ways could the last eight week sessions have been better?
- What would you do to improve this going forward?

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